THE COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

Volume XVII | New York, Wednesday, March 15, 1933 | Number 20

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Previous issues of THE COMMONWEAL are indexed in the *Reader's Guide* and the *Catholic Periodical Index*.
Published weekly and copyrighted 1933, in the United States by the Calvert Publishing Corporation, Grand Central Terminal, New York, N. Y. United States: $5.00; Foreign: $6.00; Canada: $5.50. Single Copies: $.10.

THE PRESIDENT

WHEN Franklin Delano Roosevelt took his oath as President, the sky over Washington was leaden grey and a chill wind snarled amid the leafless trees before the Capitol. And above his head, before he stood up to assume the gravest responsibility weighing upon any American today, his country's flag drooped at half mast, in mourning for Senator Walsh. And there were those who whispered that two Presidents who had taken their oaths of office under half-masted flags—McKinley and Harding: or so it is said —died tragic and untimely deaths in office. And there were others in the immense assemblage of citizens before the Capitol who also thought of Mayor Cermak, dying in Florida, after being struck down by the assassin's bullet meant for the incoming President. No wonder, then, if to that multitude these things seemed like the omens recorded in the superstitious legends of all countries as having been manifested at periods of disaster. For there was an atmosphere of foreboding in the nation's capital in which such coincidences (together with many truly serious circumstances) could readily be accepted as the portents of impending catastrophe—the sinister shadows of doom.

Millions upon millions of American men, women and children are suffering from hunger and thirst, or menaced with such sufferings. All the banks of the country were closed or closing as the inaugural ceremonies at Washington went on under that lowering sky. War that threatens the whole world is actually blazing and spreading in the Orient. There are wars and rumors of war among our neighbors of South America. Democracy has been overthrown in Germany and the bonfires of the restoration of Prussian plutocracy and nationalistic militarism are burning near the gates of half the powder magazines of Europe. Russia is resuming on a monstrous scale that enslavement of its helpless farming folk which the atheistic tyranny that rules that vast and powerful country intends as the final act to make complete the welding together of a militarized and disciplined mass of uprooted humanity which is being rapidly prepared to attempt the conquest of the world.

So stand a few only of the frightful facts of the world's agonizing crisis which confronted Franklin Delano Roosevelt as he took his oath as President. But he did not bow his head under the influence of the lowering sky. Even before the leader of his people took his oath—and spoke words which may be re-

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corded in future history alongside of the words said at Gettysburg—the lowered flags were at the peak again. The common sense of a woman (Mrs. Henry T. Rainey, wife of the new Speaker of the House of Representatives) saw to it that the red tape of official ritual was cut, and the flags were run up.

And now that the delayed crisis of the nation's long, slow sickness has come—to use the graphic image of a New York merchant, Mr. John S. Burke—and it has been recognized, and diagnosed, and the fully effective remedies can be swiftly applied, an incubus of paralyzing uncertainty has been banished, and Americans may face the facts and not be stupefied by the fear-thoughts of their situation. And in the clear light of calm reason, they will see that all the actual distress and threatened disasters which could be catalogued are, after all, not inevitable things—they are controllable events. They are the effects of the human will when it was directed to wrong ends, and can be corrected by the human will. They were not the inevitable products of blind, impersonal forces. Wherever, and whenever, human beings themselves, particularly their leaders and guides and teachers, have desired what was harmful or wrong evil results have followed. When they have desired personal power, and the satisfaction of egotistical pride, and have given themselves up to the cravings of avarice, and of cruelty, and to the excitations of all sensual passions, their free will has been their instrument; it has sought what seemed to be good to their self-deluded souls; and now that the apples of Sodom are bitter in their mouths, the grey sky over Washington on Inaugural Day is but a faint shadow of the darkness which overshadows humanity—the darkness of fear. In that darkness, as in some evil fog, all things are magnified and monstrously distorted, and men forget—or tend to forget—the truth of truths which their very manhood is given to them to manifest, namely, the truth stated so simply by their new President in his inaugural address:

"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."

These are not the words of some parrot repeating a pollyanna platitude. This is not the slogan of some superficial, professional optimist. Our country has suffered woful things because of shallow, silly, sunny-jimmery, perverted optimism, doping our souls with delusions. Facts have been dealt with merely by denying their existence; we have tried to hide the pure nakedness of truth with a robe of quackery. We have tried to banish fear by commercialized incantations, declaring that there was nothing that men could or ought to fear save the lack of money and the things that money can buy; and now that we are facing fear far too many of us are so weak through self-indulgence that we cannot even remember our courage, our honor, our will to face the truth.

But our new President has faced his fear. Let none of us believe for a moment that he is merely a favored child of good fortune, and that the smiling confidence with which he took his oath and spoke to his people under the leaden sky at Washington had not been won in battle. He who was stricken down in mid-career of a most exceptionally rapid and apparently easy and almost fortuitously successful public service, by a most insidious disease, could not possibly have escaped coming face to face with real, actual fear. His own proper pride of manhood, his personal honor, his own will, his faith in his God, have been tried in a fire; he knows what he is talking about when he tells us now that the only thing to fear is fear itself.

And his people know that before he thus testified he had bowed his head in prayer before the altar of his God, and his right hand had rested upon the book of God, upon words such as these:

"If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. . . . And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

And his people will remember that there are many men of strong will who also have defeated fear, and won great prizes of health and wealth and power and place—but for themselves alone. And there have been others who in doing so have used what they won for others as well as for themselves, sharing it with others, because they knew that no matter how much their own efforts had strengthened their will, and aided their courage, and hardened the steel of their honor, all these things were first of all the gifts of God, but not given to be selfishly monopolized, but given so that they may share with others what God has, so to speak, shared with them. The crippled folk at Warm Springs winning their way back to health know how their President, their friend, regards his stewardship, and how he has traded with the talents entrusted to him by his Master.

His people will think with respect, of course, of the expert experience which their new President has had in the practical affairs of government. They will regard with a confidence justified by his whole career his ability to deal swiftly yet justly with all sorts and conditions of men. They rest assured of his whole-hearted acceptance of the principles of the American republic, and his knowledge of its history, and his instinctive and inherited congeniality with its best traditions. But those among his people who still are religious, who still place religious principles above all other things, and who know in their hearts that if religion in America today seems weakened and almost sinking in a rising flood of materialistic paganism—a paganism more deadly than that of pre-Christian times because the new paganism knows no gods at all save Self and Sense—such religious people know that all their President's qualifications to deal with the crisis which confronts his nation rest upon and are strengthened and supported by his true and faithful trust in God.

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For that greatest of all good reasons, how instantly and steadily and unitedly ought they not now to respond to their President's appeal. With him, now they must face the nation's fear, and, knowing that, as he says, it is the only thing they really have to fear, proceed to conquer that "nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance." What if the banks are closed? They will open again. "The money changers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization." Will they return again to seize it? Not soon, at least; not if the people of the nation heed and apply the words of the President. Does starvation menace us? What! with a land such as ours, where nature still offers her bounty and human efforts multiply that inexhaustible true wealth a thousandfold? We have but to stretch forth our hands—not to grasp each man for his selfish sake—but in human coöperation for the human weal of all. Does war threaten us with horrors worse than the worst of those fatal years from 1914 to 1918? Only because as yet we have not truly faced the fear of it and found—as good-will surely always can find—that love in fact is stronger than hatred, faith can master doubt, peace is more powerful than strife. But that love must not be false—it must not be facile, materialistic sentimentalism masquerading as love—it must be *caritas,* the love of God, coming from God, directed toward God through the channels of the God-fathered brotherhood of man.

WEEK BY WEEK

AS WE write, the President's proclamation closing the banks of the nation for a period of days has just been issued. Thus there is brought to a head a situation unparalleled in the history of the nation, and one upon which we shall not comment without further thought. It suffices for the moment to proceed to the Washington of last week. Then, after long-continued allegros and andantes, the Senate Committee on Banking finally got round to a good old-fashioned scherzo. The theme was the National City Bank, and the fun lay in the circumstance that the (almost) biggest monetary institution in the country, the officers of which told us in 1930 and later just when the depression would be over and the advice of which has been taken seriously in all parts of the world, was busy throwing snowballs with the people's money. These chilly playthings grew larger and larger while the citizen looked merrily on. To think that the money he invested was expanding under his very eyes! The citizen watched the National City Bank stock get ten times more valuable and look cheap even at that. Of course the explanation surely was that the brains of Charlie Mitchell were masterly and that the stars were set just right. Accordingly the citizen hastened to buy everything the National City Bank had for sale. We eagerly purchased Peruvian bonds, Chilean nitrate bonds, Cuban sugar stocks and other articles too numerous to mention. But it now appears that Charlie and the bank were winking all the time. They just wanted to see how big the snowballs would get before they started to melt. And so far as the Peruvian bonds et cetera were concerned, the object of the game was to find out how many idle American dollars could be given a permanent vacation.

Banking in the U. S. A.

MR. MITCHELL was quite candid about everything. He explained all the finesses and leads of his little game, so that any bank with the right kind of affiliate and salesmen ought to have no difficulty in the future making at least a little slam. Indeed, he even described the best method for dodging the rake-off to the house—i. e., the United States Treasury. We ourselves believe that this method is far superior to that used by Al Capone, who is a bungler by comparison though of course he was selling only beer, whisky and what goes with them. The country, therefore, ought not to be annoyed. It has been given a lot of expert information free of charge, and in this case it is much better information than was previously available. Unfortunately, Mr. Mitchell's candor stopped with his sudden and wholly unexpected resignation. One cannot too seriously deplore this move. What everybody wanted was a little more enlightenment. Just how busy are the directors of a bank? Mr. Mitchell's directors, at any rate, seem to have existed for the purpose of voting him into office and accepting his departure. That they possessed the faintest inkling of what kind of game Charlie was playing is a suggestion too horrible for words. After all, the nation needs confidence in its banking institutions, and where is it to come from if—if we do not assume courageously that the National City directors were playing golf while Charlie was being naughty?

Inauguration Sidelights

ONE OF the editorial staff of THE COMMONWEAL found himself with many thousands of other Americans swept along to Washington on March 4 by a combination of circumstances including kind friends in the capital city and the extremely low round trip fares which distracted railroads were offering to keep the wheels turning, a feeling that the inauguration was to be a historic event about which appreciatively goggle-eyed grandchildren might like to hear some years hence, and a nervous excitement to keep on the go which the huge cloudy portents of the immediate past induced. Tense emotions seemed to be typical of the hordes who gathered on Pennsylvania Avenue. As former President Hoover and President Roosevelt rode down from the White House, there was a grey, cold sky over them; and the faces of the onlookers were the faces of an anxious mob. There was only a scattering of perfunctory cheers and they seemed rather to violate the prevailing atmosphere. The newspapers have reported the impression made on

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Mrs. Roosevelt as she listened to her husband uttering his first declaration as the leader of his nation. She said the crowds were rather terrifying, that they looked as though they wanted to be told what to do, and then would be eager to do it. The return from the Capitol and the inaugural parade were showier, noisier. The number of those at the inauguration was one of the greatest ever seen. We had a feeling that these people had come from some intrinsically serious urge to see their new President, as a demonstration of fealty and a hope of renewing their hope. They were orderly, respectable and worried Americans; to use a vernacular expression with particular American significance, they were as a group "homey" looking people. In themselves, we believe they were a touching pledge of basic soundness for an improved future.

Nationalism and the Crisis

BITTER nationalistic conflicts in Europe are aggravated at a time like this by the usefulness of appeals to chauvinistic sentiment. Peoples sorely divided by economic distress and social theory can in a measure be unified by emphasis on passions which seem to transcend national boundaries. That is what makes minor episodes look extremely dangerous. Notice, for instance, the growing rift between Italy and Jugoslavia. Event after event, each trivial enough in itself, has created a situation in which there can easily be found the seeds of a new Continental war. Add the shipment of "old iron" to Hungary, which almost created a panic in Paris, and such declarations as that of the Hitler régime concerning "military secrets," and you have at least all the psychology which is necessary. Still more interesting is the circumstance that Mussolini is declared to be exceedingly pessimistic. His principal conviction, as reported by various persons of moment who have enjoyed talking with him, is that existing peace treaties must be revised speedily. The minor dictators all echo their master. Something must be done to take people's minds off their woes. A threat of war is advantageous. But what if the threat led to the real thing? Dynamite has a tendency to explode.

For a Minimum Wage

GOVERNOR LEHMAN'S recent plea that New York assume the labor leadership of the nation in the present crisis by enacting a minimum-wage law for women and children, has deservedly elicited the approval and support of a very large number of the persons and groups, both labor and employer, representing humane and responsible views in this field. The governor is not moved merely by the abstract wish to make things better for the humble industrial toiler. His message concerns a highly concrete situation, which he discusses in some detail, a situation both very distressing and very ominous. It appears undeniable that the sweatshop is returning in numbers, not only in New York, but in most of the important industrial states. When the workers greatly exceed the jobs, as is at present tragically the case, this tendency is almost inevitable, to get labor as cheaply as possible by treating it "as a commodity in the open market" (our readers will recognize the paraphrase from the papal encyclical which expressly forbids the practice). Besides the degradation of the worker, the dismal cycle of depressed buying power and correspondingly depressed prices which ends in disaster, ensues.

INCORPORATED in the governor's message are the unanimous findings of the conference of governors recently called by Governor Ely, in which the federal Department of Labor participated. They advocate "a mandatory minimum-wage law" in every state, to protect women and minors who are now, in great numbers, forced to accept "sub-standard wages" or none; to protect "employers who would like to pay a living wage" from the competition of "these starvation wages"; and to stop "the downward spiral" before "unemployment has wrecked the morale and efficiency of our industrial population." To make these words more actual, we have only to consider that the governor cites cases in which the wage for a full week's work is $4.00, a figure which the further testimony of investigators revises downward to $3.00. The New York *Times* recalls that last summer's labor survey showed that about one-fourth of the women workers in Manhattan get no more than $8.00 a week, "while up-state canneries are paying from eight cents an hour up." There are certain legal difficulties to be considered in framing the proposed legislation, since the Supreme Court of the United States has declared a mandatory minimum-wage law unconstitutional. The alternatives are, either an advisory law, in which public opinion is the enforcing agent, and newspapers are allowed to print the names of employers who underpay; or a mandatory law such as the governor appears to consider possible at present, in which the wage is based "not on living standards [the chief point of dissent] but on the minimum value of the services rendered." We urge the legislature to act in this matter. They will thereby erect a certain defense for those whose present defenselessness is dreadful and complete, provide a powerful stabilizer for industry in the state, and give an example likely to be widely followed at this most psychological moment.

Repose for Profit

THE RETREAT remains one of the most popular religious institutions, and quite correctly so. Everyone needs to "get away" occasionally for a few quiet days spent in what may be termed the cultivation of the soul. We were struck by the aptness of a new slogan: "Come to the retreat and forget the depression." Although invented by the sponsors of a Georgetown Alumni Retreat, to open at Mount Manresa, Staten Island, on the evening of March 24, it might well be used generally. To forget the depression does not mean, of course, that the effects of the reigning disturbance are to be ignored in

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a spirit of devil take the hindmost. The meaning is simply that most of our discussion of problems and solutions is utterly futile compared with reflection upon how energies too frequently concentrated on self-service may be put to work for the Kingdom. Purging the mind and heart of man is, perhaps, the greatest service which the Church can render a distressed humanity battling desperately to patch up the holes in an inadequate social system. And since the retreat is one of the best ways for effecting that cleansing, its significance was never greater than now.

WE DESIRE to call particular attention to the article contributed to this issue by Mr. Herman Block.

Political Education

As a result of practical experience, he arrived at conclusions similar to those several times advocated by THE COMMONWEAL. The greatest political need of the present is properly qualified leadership. One who undertakes to govern must be in some manner educated for the business of government. Of course this training cannot be merely a matter of a college degree, but it must include knowledge of what the public business is all about in this complex age. Whether Mr. Block's own practical suggestion is feasible or not must be considered apart. He writes: "There should be a requirement that no person's name be placed upon any ballot for election to any public office unless and until that person shall have filed with the Board of Elections, or whatever body is charged with conducting the elections, a certificate from the Council for Public Law and Administration, showing his fitness to discharge the duties of the office to which he seeks election." While this recommendation is not as simple as it sounds, we are deeply interested in it and we invite the views of our readers upon it.

WHILE Catholics are aware of the frequent, and no doubt in their way justified, laments which purport that the expressed wishes of the Holy See with regard to liturgical music in Catholic churches seem to bear so little fruit, there are nevertheless increasing signs that the seeds are germinating. One which has indeed blossomed was recently given public witness under the patronage of Bishop Thomas J. Walsh of Newark. There on four consecutive afternoons and evenings the Schola Cantorum of the Order of the Religious Teachers Filippini, of Villa Lucia, Morristown, New Jersey, before audiences composed of several hundred of the clergy, of religious, of choirmasters, organists and singers, gave programs illustrating the three acceptable ecclesiastical forms: Gregorian Chant, polyphonic and modern liturgical music. His Excellency spoke on these occasions and, calling attention to the programs for high Masses and solemn high requiem Masses, said that they were to be followed in every church in the Newark diocese. Nicola A. Montani, editor of the *Catholic Choirmaster* and professor of music at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, Darlington, New Jersey, gave an explanatory comment before each demonstration. The thirty-six postulants and novices comprising the Schola, under the direction of Sister Carolina Ionata, B.M., sang with rare perfection. Even in the soft recitatives, their rendering of every syllable of the text could be heard by the most distant hearers, and in the more brilliant parts the tone quality and clear enunciation were equally a joy and inspiration. Many of the singers were only thirteen or fourteen years of age, and their ages ranged up to twenty-one. The perfection of the work of such groups should help even those who must follow in more modest ways to appreciate truly sacred music.

Young Singers

WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL LAW?

CHINA is a long way off, Jehol was a name we seldom heard until recently, and the stakes for which Japan is playing appear to have little enough to do with the issues confronting us. The most that one overhears in general conversation is an allusion to that hypothetical war during which it would be necessary for the United States Navy to defend the west coast, Hawaii and the Philippines. But it would be genuinely well for all of us to realize the seriousness of what has occurred. None of the melancholy events which have disturbed an upset world throws more light on the fundamental errors on which world society is based, and none is so ominous an indication of what may happen in the future.

On February 24 the Japanese delegation withdrew from the League of Nations, after that body had cast a unanimous vote discountenancing the policy pursued by Tokyo. This event is in a class by itself. Up until the time that the substance of the Lytton Report was approved, it was quite possible to feel that Japan might after all be on the side of the angels. Now, if public opinion and international law mean anything, the central jury of nations has decided. When Matsuoka walked out, he showed dramatically that his government preferred defiance to coöperation. It is this fact which, from our own point of view, must for the moment push all else into the background. What is the value, what the authority, of the international instruments created since the war? Does the law of nations developed by jurists and statesmen possess any de facto existence? If it does not, what rights and duties exist apart from treaties to which the several peoples attach temporary significance? Such are the questions raised at this time.

Now of course it will be impossible to assert that Japan is the first country to have struck a blow at the League. The very structure of this body is weakened by a fundamental flaw—the gap which exists between trying to rule according to principles of abstract justice and trying to rule in accordance with punitive treaties signed between European powers after 1918.

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So long as it is assumed that "might makes right" where the defeated Central Powers are concerned, so long will it be impossible to assume that right is always right. This point was publicly recognized by Mr. Bernard Baruch when he said to the Senate that the reconstruction of Europe could not be accomplished until the sting had been removed from the Treaty of Versailles. The bias so evident in that document has been responsible for every failure to make the decisions of the League effective in Europe. Here is the reason why the disavowal of Poland's seizure of Vilna remained a mere series of written phrases, and why the application of legislation governing minorities has proved so pitifully inadequate. The League developed out of a European debacle and is inextricably bound up with the will to create peace, which now exists in Europe. And it is absolutely out of the question that mandates should be respected in Asia which are not obeyed in the very center of Christendom.

Again, the United States has said, though not so openly, almost the precise equivalent of what Tokyo has said. Though this country never formally became a member of the League, it was on the understanding that we expected to lend active aid and support that the institution was founded. And why, fundamentally, did we refuse to come in? Because we feared that Geneva might reach decisions inimical to our free action in Latin America. This "free action" is not even guaranteed by treaties. It is, like the Japanese conception of Manchuria, the pure outgrowth of "historical circumstances"; and in the past it has been used, even within the memory of all of us, to justify military interference in the affairs of peoples to the south and to annex a territory useful to us from a commercial and military point of view. Any honest citizen who looks the facts squarely in the face cannot easily bring himself to deny that the reasons which induced Japan to quit the League Assembly are the same as those which prevented us from joining that Assembly.

The whole structure of existing international law is thus revealed as a quite tentative effort made by thoughtful groups and individuals to promote a safer and more legitimate world order. Such power as has stood behind this law has been supplied either by nations which wished to guarantee the permanence of advantages gained through past treaties, or by nations which sought to coax modifications of treaties out of an Assembly easier to treat with than individual unfriendly powers. Thus all that we now respect as the "sovereign rights of nations" reposes fundamentally upon a kind of balance of power concretely symbolized at Geneva. Such is the situation. The reason that it remains so unsatisfactory is clearly the dogged refusal by Christian governments to respect the dictates of collective Christian morality. By this we do not mean that the highest commands of the Gospel can be expressed through any kind of political agency. But we do mean that the word "law" has no significance unless it is ethical-minded. The failure to do more is, of course, no reason for abandoning the effort. While most of us realize that war is a stupid crime and that law is our only hope of escape from that crime, it is not too late to press on, little by little, for a more reasonable order of things. But whether anything can really be done to prevent Japan from carrying out its will in North China is another matter entirely. If the rest of the world were united in spirit, there would be a different story to tell.

What is to become of the great amorphous land of China is known to God alone. Certainly few of us realize, despite the wealth of information available in books, how chaotic and socially distraught it has become. The older China, based upon the ethics and laws of Confucius, was a nation of small farms ruled by an absolute monarch and determined sociologically by a concept of relative economic equality. But with the collapse of the monarchy, the appearance of a wealthy merchant caste which invested its earnings in land and (finally) the emergence of bandit generals on a grand scale, the picture completely changed. The average Chinese peasant became a tenant, nor was even he able to till lands distant from the immediate confines of some village, lest he fall a victim to inevitable bands of prowlers. Catastrophic results have followed. The lot of the Chinese farm-worker is far worse than that of a beast of burden in even the backward states of the Union. It is stated by competent observers that after a winter the country population of many districts is so weakened by hunger as to be unfit for work. Of the multitudes who flock to industrial towns to toil in factories incomparably worse than any Britain knew in the early days of the machine period, it is chiefly the women and children who bear the brunt of working conditions horrible beyond words. As a German observer, Dr. Hans Penzel writes, "The masses of Chinese workers are decimated by hunger and disease, dying by the thousands far from home and family, embittered and demoralized." If such a land is a fertile field for Bolshevist cultivation, it is also defenseless against foreign aggression. Perhaps the Chinese themselves can, by reëmphasizing their ancient traditions, restore enough of the old social solidarity to save themselves. But so far the achievement of the "foreign student group" has been to demoralize further rather than to help.

Under such conditions, we as Americans owe ourselves the duty of thinking clearly and to the point. Japan's repudiation of the League decision is one thing; Japan's activities in China are another. The two must not be confused. While we ourselves believe in the validity of the Lytton Report, we find ourselves able to understand Japanese resentment of it and able to doubt whether the attitude of any other country would have been different under the same circumstances. Meanwhile it has grown still more obvious that the Asia we confront today is not the Asia of old. This is no time for sentimentalities. It is an age of challenging facts.

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LET LIQUOR PAY THE WAR DEBTS

By J. ELLIOT ROSS

As is well known, Father Ross has been one of the most prominent among Catholic advocates of total abstinence. Conceding in the following paper that the Eighteenth Amendment will be abrogated, he holds that temperance workers must now strive to prevent a "slipping back into the slough of social evils from which we tried to extricate ourselves through prohibition." The best method, he feels, is that advocated by an "ardent dry friend," who holds that a federal dispensary system would probably correct the worst tendencies. In addition it would also conceivably permit a settlement of the war debts.—The Editors.

A FEW years ago, some of the most ardent wets were just as loud as the drys in condemning the old saloon with its inevitable hook-up with prostitution and corrupt politics. Although striving with might and main for the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment, many of them were chivalrous enough to admit that at least one good thing had come out of national prohibition—the abolition of the saloon. For the most part they were very vague as to how we could have liquor without saloons, but they were strong in asserting that the saloon could never come back.

However, now that we are, apparently, coming closer to actual repeal, the wets are not nearly as vocal as they were five years ago in their condemnation of the saloon. And if the Eighteenth Amendment goes by the board, it seems pretty certain that the saloon will return unless the issue is taken out of the hands of the extreme wets by the mass of moderate men willing to accept a compromise. There are numbers who think that in 1920 any one of several compromises would have been better than putting through national prohibition when there was not enough sentiment back of the law to give us real prohibition. And these same men think that any one of several compromises would be better today than slipping back into the slough of social evils from which we tried to extricate ourselves through prohibition.

Simply as a sort of social historian, and not as in any way advocating it—for as a priest I have tried not to advocate specific political solutions even when the questions involved had a moral bearing—I should like to pass on to the readers of THE COMMONWEAL the compromise suggested by an ardent dry friend and a strict teetotaller, a man who has never touched a drop of intoxicating liquor. I shall merely give his suggestions and arguments, leaving your wet, dry and moist readers to evaluate them.

My dry friend's suggestion, then, is this. First of all to amend the Eighteenth Amendment to read somewhat as follows: "The manufacture, sale or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, or the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from, the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited except to the government of the United States." Details as to the actual distribution of liquor by the federal government would have to be worked out by law, just as details of complete prohibition were worked out. This would not affect the beer bills now before Congress, any more than the existing Eighteenth Amendment affects them. What percentage of alcohol is necessary to make a beverage intoxicating would be for Congress to decide, subject to review by the Supreme Court. But this would restrict the manufacture, sale or transportation of distilled liquors to the federal government, or to its agents on the principle *qui facit per alium facit seipsum.*

My dry friend does not think that a federal dispensary system is an ideal solution of the liquor problem. In fact, he does not think that there is any ideal system for controlling men's appetite for intoxicating beverages. But undoubtedly a great many moderate drys would agree with him that a federal dispensary system would be enormously superior to what we had under the old saloon, and what we seem likely to have again if the matter is left to the die-hards of both camps. Moreover, it would give us a somewhat flexible arrangement that could be changed from time to time by Congress without the need of going through the highly difficult and complicated process of amending the Constitution. For if one method of federal distribution proved unsatisfactory, another could be tried.

One of my dry friend's reasons for preferring a federal dispensary system to private distribution—assuming, always, that we are going to have liquor anyhow—is that it breaks the old nexus between liquor and the ward heeler. There would not be multiplied in every big city the social sore spots of saloons that formed so large an element in corrupt politics. We all know that politics are bad enough now, but some of us can remember when they were even worse because the brewing and distilling interests had a nucleus of their henchmen in strategic positions. Neither will there be under a dispensary system the same intimate connection as formerly existed between liquor and prostitution. We shall never eliminate all prostitution, just as we shall never eliminate all drunkenness. But under a dispensary system liquor will not feed prostitution as vigorously as under private enterprise.

He goes on to give a more modern reason for a dispensary system, namely, some of the things we have of late been hearing from the technocrats. We have been told that the machine has displaced man, and that if we are to balance production and consumption for the avoidance of a social cataclysm, all industries must be planned from the standpoint of the social good rather than from the standpoint of private profit. Well,

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here is one industry, liquor, that is about to be started *de novo,* and which therefore can be planned from the beginning without all the complications that would result from interfering with an already established industry. It would be folly to put this about-to-be-established industry in private hands dominated solely by the profit motive. For the moment distilling became lawful by private enterprise, there would be a rush of capital into this field. Inevitably, it would be overcapitalized. And then to pay dividends on bigger plants than were really necessary to meet a legitimate demand, the retail dealers would be forced to take more and more liquor, while the distillers spent more and more in extravagant advertising to create a taste for their wares.

At its best, liquor is bad; at its worst, it is a social calamity. And if it is to be kept at its best instead of allowing it to degenerate into its worst, urges my friend, this will only be through such rigid control as a dispensary system offers. As a department of the government, like the post office, there would be no more need of the dispensary pushing business in order to make money than there would be to push the postal business. And although there might be some inefficiency and graft in a government dispensary, there would be a great deal less evil than in putting liquor under private enterprise. If we are to have the liquor industry at all, let's give the technocrats a chance to show what they can do in planning it from the social standpoint.

And for those who are more interested in economic considerations than in ethics, there is an additional reason for preferring a federal dispensary system to any other compromise with the wet forces. For, claims my friend, it might be used as a means of solving another of our insistent problems, the European war debts, and through them of indirectly helping the problem of unemployment.

Great Britain, France and Italy, our chief foreign debtors, owe us about $10,000,000,000. The annual payments for interest and amortization amount to around $25,000,000. For some years now a very vocal group of bankers, economists, statesmen and politicians have been dinging into our ears that this huge indebtedness is at the bottom of the present world depression. The necessity of making these payments has demoralized foreign trade, undermined the gold standard, shaken the credit of nation after nation.

At the same time, they say, what these governments really borrowed was goods, and the debts can only be paid in goods. There is not enough gold in the world to make such huge payments year after year. But the debts cannot be paid in goods as long as we maintain a tariff wall that excludes goods of these debtor countries. We are in the position of demanding payment, and simultaneously forbidding the only way in which payment can be made. Therefore we must either accept cancellation—or repudiation—or we must lower our tariff barriers.

Probably what these men say should be liberally discounted for various reasons. Some of these same bankers may be interested in getting the burden of international debt reduced so that the security for their private loans will be increased. Some of the college professors may be mere sentimental internationalists. But even discounting their statements quite largely, there remains the inescapable truth that in the long run such huge debts can be paid only in goods. Granting this, however, does it necessarily follow that there is no alternative to cancelling the debts, scaling them down a great deal, accepting repudiation, or lowering our tariffs? My dry friend sees another way out, and that is where a federal dispensary system comes in.

In 1912, before national prohibition, the United States government collected $18,883,000 in customs duties on imported intoxicating beverages, valued at nearly $20,000,000. During 1913, the government collected $158,069,000 internal revenue on distilled liquor manufactured in this country. This must have been worth at least $250,000,000 wholesale, and considerably more retail. That is to say, the liquor bill of the United States exceeded the amount of all the receipts during 1931 from the European debtor countries for interest and principal.

Now it seems probable that the consumption of liquor in this country under a dispensary system would not fall far short of what it was in 1912 and 1913. For the population has increased since then, and the thirst of some people has been whetted by prohibition. And if the United States government, instead of manufacturing wines and distilled liquors here, bought from the European governments what was needed to satisfy this demand, allowing them to credit these purchases against debt payments, then the problem of the war debts would be solved. The European governments would buy the liquor from their own nationals in their depreciated currencies, pay us in the goods so bought, and no transfer of gold would be necessary.

Assuming that we are going to have liquor, my friend argues that this would be the most advantageous arrangement for us. For putting the debt situation in its simplest terms, we may say that the European governments either pay their debts to us, or they do not. Taking first the assumption, that the debts are not paid, this means that the United States government will have to pay the holders of the United States bonds issued in order that our government might lend to Europe. Inevitably that means increased taxes. It is true that some of these taxes might be levied on the sale of liquor. But it is also true that the revenues —both internal and customs duties—before the war on all distilled liquors did not equal the payments we are supposed to get now from Europe. Consequently, there would probably still be a deficit to be made up through other taxes. Therefore, instead of the consumers of liquor paying off the whole of the bonds issued for the European debts, they would pay only

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a portion, and the general tax-paying public would have to shoulder the rest.

It is also true that allowing private manufacture of liquor in this country would give employment to some few thousands and would use some of our excess grains. But the number employed in the liquor industry was not very large in the old days, compared with total employment or compared with today's total unemployment, and employment would be considerably less in the liquor industry now, for invention has played its part here as well as elsewhere. The machine has displaced the man, and it will continue to displace him. Let the technocrats calculate for us the man power needed to make a barrel of whiskey now as compared with 1913.

Moreover, to offset whatever economic advantages there might be from the domestic manufacture of liquor, there would be at least some of the benefits we are told would result from a settlement of the whole debt question. And certainly we stand to benefit to a greater extent through Europe paying us than we do by mere cancellation or repudiation—the only alternative to being paid in goods. As far as we can know anything about a very complex question, the increased purchasing power created in Europe, the stabilization of the gold situation, and the healthy atmosphere created by governments being able to meet their obligations, would bring greater benefits than the good resulting from employing a few men in wineries and distilleries and using some domestic grapes and grain.

But taking the other assumption, that Europe pays us, then if it is not in liquor, it must be in some other kind of goods. What will those goods be? And how can those goods be sold in this country without drastically reducing our tariffs, thus bringing those goods into competition with domestic products and consequently interfering seriously with existing employment here at home? The present high tariff may be a sad mistake, but it is an actuality. To allow foreign steel, for instance, to come in now when our own plants are running at 15 percent capacity, would certainly be a doubtful benefit. Or shall Europe pay us in cotton, wheat or corn?

Considering the situation as it is, there is no legitimate industry with which the payment of the war debts in liquor would interfere, because for the past twelve or fourteen years we have had no legitimate industry in liquor. Doubtless the plan suggested would interfere considerably with bootleggers, but they are outlaws. And very few persons would weigh the payment of the war debts against the support of bootleggers.

The importation of European intoxicants would prevent the restoration of distilleries here at home, but the ex-distillers would be no worse off than they are now. They might still live in hope that once the war debts are out of the way, or at least materially reduced, the federal dispensary system would buy liquor at home under some such plan as now applies to medicinal liquor. The decision would rest with Congress.

Of course, a great many people will say that this is merely a dream. Congress would never pass any such amendment to the Eighteenth Amendment, or the states ratify it; and after that, Congress would never legislate in the way necessary to carry the plan into effect. All of which may be true. He admits that from the standpoint of practical politics, he may be talking about a wholly impracticable idea. But if so, then, he says that he is in the same boat with the people who talk about drastically reducing our tariff, or cutting down federal expenses, or saving on veterans' compensation. The wine interests of California and the influence of those who would profit by the domestic manufacture of liquor may easily prove too strong opponents for the plan of a federal dispensary system with importations from abroad. But that does not really militate against the idea in itself. It may still be the best solution of two very complex problems—the return of liquor and the war debts.

By suggesting such a solution, my dry friend says that he does not abandon any position he has previously held. He is still a dry in the sense that he is a total abstainer and wishes that everyone else were the same. And he is still a prohibitionist in the sense that he believes the federal government has the right to prohibit the manufacture, sale or transportation of intoxicating beverages under two conditions: when the abuse of such beverages is a sufficiently serious social evil, and when there is a sufficient public opinion back of the prohibitory law to make it effective.

In 1920 many moderate drys thought that the first of these conditions was fulfilled, but not the second. It seemed to them that the drys made a mistake in going too fast, taking positions that they could not consolidate. And they naively assumed that their work was done once they had the Eighteenth Amendment, or at least that they had merely to concentrate on the enforcement of the law. But such a law cannot be enforced against as great a proportion of the people as was arrayed against national prohibition. Such a law will be obeyed only when it is accepted, and vast numbers of our people had still to be educated to its acceptance.

My friend is sorry that the American people do not now accept prohibition and do not agree with him that the modicum of prohibition we achieved warrants its continuation. But since they do not, he hopes that rather than go back to the old saloon they will settle both the liquor problem and the war debts through a federal dispensary system.

Thirteen years ago, the wets made the mistake of standing pat on the old saloon, when they might have avoided national prohibition by accepting some such compromise as a dispensary system or the outlawing of distilled liquors. And he trusts that the drys, failing to realize the trend of public sentiment today, will not make the converse mistake of standing pat on complete national prohibition, and so allow the extreme wets to bring back the saloon.

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EDUCATE THE POLITICIAN

By HERMAN BLOCK

A LOCAL sewer scandal was the efficient cause of my being precipitated from the rôle of mere citizen and taxpayer to that of holder of a public office. The community is in a county of the state of New York which is generally described by the politicians when, under the guise of a general law, they seek to enact special legislation applicable solely to that particular county, as "a county having a population of not less than 250,000 nor more than 300,000, adjoining a city of the first class having a population of more than 6,000,000."

Some politicians of the party in power decided that we needed sewers; the necessary percentage of taxpayers signed a petition for the organization of the "sewer district" on the representation that the installation of the system would cost about $50.00 or $60.00 per lot. After the "district" was organized and the engineers had completed their detailed plans and estimates, they assured the taxpayers that the project would cost approximately $1,000,000 in a territory, the total assessed value of which was about $4,000,000. In other words, instead of the cost being $50.00 or $60.00 per lot, it would be some $200 per lot for each of the next twenty years. We were all willing to have sewers, but not at such a price. The question was, what could we do? The "district" had been organized, the commissioners had been appointed, and certain obligations had already been incurred.

Indignation meetings were held, a committee to consider the matter was appointed, and the usual execrations were cast upon the politicians who had brought the community to such straits. It happened that I was a practising attorney, and I was elected to serve as chairman of the committee. We considered the matter from the viewpoint of dissolving the "district," but the statute provided no such remedy. We thought of bringing an action in the State Supreme Court to vacate the order establishing the district on the ground that the taxpayers had been led into signing the petition for its creation by fraud and misrepresentation; but the result of that seemed doubtful, and the prospect of long and expensive litigation loomed ahead. The most certain alternative seemed to be to incorporate as a village, and to withdraw from the "district," since the statute did not permit of such a "district" being maintained in an incorporated village—with exceptions which are not material here. At any rate, our community incorporated as a village, and I was elected its first mayor, serving incidentally also as counsel. Thus began my first acquaintance with public office.

I believe I have attained that age of discretion where I am competent to pass a tolerant judgment upon the vices of others, and a critical appraisal of the virtues of myself. I had been engaged in quite active independent practice for some twelve years, had had a fairly wide experience in all phases of civil litigation, and, in general, was probably equipped, both by education and experience, better than most taxpayers to discharge the functions of the office to which I had been elected. Yet I was amazed at my complete lack of even a working knowledge of what I shall call public law and administration. I knew that in the state of New York we had a town law, a village law, and various other laws affecting the state and its political subdivisions. I knew in detail little or nothing concerning these laws; and yet I had taken an oath faithfully and fairly to administer the laws of the state of New York! By diligent and intensive study between meetings of the Board of Trustees, I was able to educate myself in the matters concerning which we needed correct and detailed knowledge and information. Having educated myself, I next had to act as instructor for my colleagues on the Board of Trustees; and, in my opinion, they were far above the average office-holder in education and experience. By the end of my term of office, all of us had acquired a very fair working knowledge of our duties, our statutory powers, and the various limitations upon our powers.

In reflecting upon my experience, I have come to a conclusion affecting public law and its administration which, very briefly stated, is this: We have attained a consciousness of the obligation resting upon society to protect the individual members of the group in their life, liberty and property, and in a measurable degree we are protecting the individual in those things; but we have not yet attained a clear consciousness of the obligation of society in obtaining for itself the full, free and competent exercise of its functions and powers. Let me make my meaning clear by antithetical examples. If an individual owns a horse, and the horse becomes sick, he may call in a veterinarian. All horse doctors are not equally competent; but we have at least some assurance that any horse doctor we may call, has what President Roosevelt called that "irreducible minimum" of expert knowledge which was necessary for him to obtain his license, because the laws of the state of New York, and the rules formulated by the State Education Department pursuant to the authority granted by the legislature, prescribe in very considerable detail both the educational requirements necessary before veterinary studies are undertaken, the course of study to be pursued, and the time to be spent in such study. And, finally, before a license to practice is issued, certain examinations must be successfully passed. There are similar statutory requirements with respect to the education and licensing of lawyers, doctors, and others rendering skilled services to individuals. The point is that when an individual is in need

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of expert services within a very large field, he has at least some assurance that the person called upon to render the service is not totally ignorant of the functions he is called upon to perform. In other words, society is enforcing its obligation to protect its citizens against ignorance or lack of skill and experience in persons called upon to render certain services, and that policy of protection now extends over a very wide field.

Now, how does the state protect itself against ignorance and lack of skill and experience in its elective officers? The answer is, it doesn't. With respect to practically all of the important elective positions in the executive and legislative branches of the government, there is no assurance that the person elected to office is in any way qualified to discharge its functions. So far as the judicial branch of government is concerned, we have at least some such assurance, for most judges are required to be members of the bar and cannot become such until duly licensed.

Two examples will make my point clear. The United States Constitution, in Article II, provides as to the President:

> No person except a natural born citizen, or a citizen of the United States, at the time of the adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the office of President; neither shall any person be eligible to that office who shall not have attained to the age of thirty-five years and been fourteen years a resident within the United States.

Not a single requirement that the person to be chosen shall have any knowledge of public finance, public or private law, the history of our own country or that of any other, the elements of policy, both foreign and domestic, systems of taxation for the raising of public revenue!

And the only qualification requirements, aside from the ability to be elected, in order to become a miller in the congressional legislative mill are contained in Article I, Section 2, of the Constitution of the United States, which provides:

> No person shall be a representative who shall not have attained to the age of twenty-five years and been seven years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that state in which he shall be chosen.

Legislative bodies have and exercise powers that immediately concern all of us: They take our property in the form of taxes; they prescribe when and how we shall be deprived of our life and liberty; they proscribe our enjoyment of things which we have enjoyed "since time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." And though we grant them these tremendous powers, we are so little concerned about the qualifications of those who exercise these powers, that we merely specify that they must not be less than a certain age, and must have resided not less than a certain period in the community which they represent!

What I am about to suggest will involve additional laws, but the primary object of the additional laws is to get better qualified men for elective public office. I should like much more emphasis put upon men in the selection of candidates for public office; and the importance of properly qualified men finds an almost intuitive acceptance.

I do not believe that laws ever have made, or ever can make men, or in any material respect change the character of men. I am a thoroughgoing individualist, and believe that there is an aristocracy of intelligence and of character, and that not every man in the street is possessed of those qualifications. I would limit elective public office to those properly qualified. The additional laws which I suggest posit the inequality of equipment, intellectual and moral, among men, and have for their purpose not at all the remaking of men, but the selection of the best man for elective public office. A Utopian dream, you say; how can you ever bring it to a practical working? The answer, I think, is in a principle underlying a comparatively recent and almost unnoticed act of the New York State Legislature.

Article II of the Public Health Law of the state of New York provides for the organization of a Public Health Council, and gives that Council power to prescribe the qualifications of every person who serves as Public Health Officer. The regulations adopted by the Public Health Council require, aside from a medical degree and a state license to practise medicine, that the person seeking to qualify as a Public Health Officer shall have either received the degree of Doctor of Public Health from an institution recognized by the Regents of the University of the State of New York, or shall in some other prescribed way satisfy the Public Health Council of his fitness.

The principle underlying this law and the regulations adopted pursuant thereto, is, to my mind, the means of improving our own elective public service. Mere desire to hold public office, coupled with a certain period of residence in the community, and being over the age of twenty-one, is not sufficient; there must be adequate preparation, skill and experience. Simply being a doctor and skilled in protecting the life of individuals, does not qualify the doctor to protect the health of a large community, for problems concerning water supply, sewage disposal, and kindred tasks are not within the ken of the average practising physician. Being a lawyer and competent to advise individuals in their private rights does not equip a man for the administration of public office and public affairs. Being a successful administrator in private business for individual gain is no criterion that such a person will be a successful administrator in public business for the public benefit.

My suggestion is that a statute be enacted creating a Council for Public Law and Administration; that there be given to such Council the power to prescribe in detail the educational and other qualifications that shall be necessary for each public office. There should then be a requirement that no person's name may be placed upon any ballot for election to any public office unless and until that person shall have filed with the Board of

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Elections, or whatever body is charged with conducting the elections, a certificate from the Council for Public Law and Administration, showing his fitness to discharge the duties of the office to which he seeks election.

In the beginning, it may be necessary to make the qualifying requirements very low. As time goes on, they can and should be made more stringent. There will, no doubt, be objection by the politicians to such compulsory education. That must be expected, but should not hinder or discourage us. Under such a system as here advocated, I believe that in the course of a comparatively short time a class of well-qualified public servants will be developed, from which our elective office holders can be chosen with some assurance that the person elected will be reasonably competent to discharge the duties of his office.

Life has become much more complex than it was in the pioneer days of the United States. Then very few looked to the holding of elective public office as their principal interest, and to the compensation derived from such office as their principal source of income. Today, we have such a class, and it is large and growing rapidly. The proper administration of public affairs is as much of a business and an art, and requires as much skill, education and experience, as the successful administration of our private affairs, but it requires skill, education and experience of a vastly different order. While the selective process for and education of holders of public office here suggested may not do away with all of the evils incident to government, yet it is a step toward that state where "philosophers are kings, and kings are philosophers."

FOR THE TRULY POOR

By DOROTHY DAY

MARIA has come in from the country where she has been living for the past years, and we are going out to look for an apartment for her. It is for herself, her two children and husband. Without money they could no longer get along in the country. The city offers Alan a job at $15.00 a week and now the problem is, finding a home. The family of four cannot live on $15.00 a week, you say? Nonsense! With courage and determination, one can do anything. Well, of course, if they are used to it. . . . But they are not. They are used to owning their own home, to having a car, to sending their children to a private school.

But Maria meets problems with a fine spirit and refuses to be defeated.

It is one of those keen, clear January days with a faint warmth in the air—a good day for a brisk walk. Starting south on Avenue A, we face a sharp wind and a dazzling winter sun which hangs low over the houses. It is early, only two o'clock in the afternoon, and it is amazing how much light and sparkle there is in that sun which hangs so low in the sky.

We have no set plan, Maria and I, that is to say, we do not really know where we are going to look. We are just setting out to walk up one street and down another until a likely place presents itself. Nevertheless, I more or less know what I am doing, for I have placed the whole matter in the hands of Saint Joseph. He is a fine one to find a home for you, I tell Maria.

Maria is a Communist, but she is very fond of me, and if I think Saint Joseph is going to guide us, well and good.

He should be especially helpful, I add, since he had so much trouble himself in finding a place for Mary and the Child, and in consideration of the fact that we are modest in our demands, not expecting much more than a stable for the rent we can pay, he will surely guide us.

On 15th Street, just across from the Immaculate Conception Church, there is an empty flat. But though the outside of the building is clean, the inside is not, and the rent is exorbitant. Twenty dollars for four rooms, no heat, no hot water, no bath! Impossible. We are not being finicky, we just know we can do better.

As I say, we had no plan on setting out, but we did intend to confine our researches to one area—that large sprawling part of the East Side, bounded by Williamsburg Bridge on the south, 14th Street on the north, the East River and Avenue A. This is a section apart from subways and elevated trains and accessible only by meandering buses or crosstown cars, which means that to get anywhere you have to pay two fares. But Maria likes to walk and so does Alan, and he can get up a half an hour earlier to make the long crosstown hike and save carfare, and the walking will be enlivening and he won't miss the country so much.

We are finding the walk enlivening ourselves, and as we go, we peer through doorways, looking for back-yard houses.

Did you know that all over the East Side there are hidden streets, accessible only through front buildings or obscure alleys, and on these hidden streets there are sometimes stables or little houses or rows of apartment buildings hidden from the world? These are quiet places, away from the noise of the street, away from trucks and taxis and street cars, and often, if the houses in front are high and those in back low, away from sunlight and air too. But sometimes the position is reversed, the houses in back are high and those in front low, and there is apt to be a bargain there.

One such place we found, back of Avenue A. It was a tall, slim back-yard house, four stories high, an

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apartment to a story, and each apartment renting for $14.00 a month.

But the janitor's husband reeled at us dangerously, and the smell of alcohol sent us fleeing to the street.

We cut over through Tompkins Square, to get to Avenue B, and it was good to feel the spongy earth under foot, though the feel of it brought a nostalgia for the fields.

Down on 8th Street past Avenue C there was an old house (not a back-yard house) facing north and south, with a trampled back yard. But the rooms were large and light and high-ceilinged, the house was a well-built one, and despite the neighborhood, which was teeming with children, one felt the luxury of space and nobly proportioned rooms. There were well-appointed bathrooms, good electric fixtures, a well-outfitted kitchen. But the rent for this place was too high, $25.00, and the gas bill would bring it up to $35.00, what with the heating of both house and water; and a man geting $15.00 a week cannot afford that, said Maria firmly.

Cutting across Avenue C which is a wide sunny street, we passed the pushcarts piled with artichokes, tomatoes, mushrooms and all kinds of fruits.

"A penny a piece for artichokes," I cried, buying some, "and mushrooms only fifteen a pound. One can always eat anyway."

"We got a letter from our cousin in Russia," Maria said, "and he writes that nowadays when the people talk about America they don't want to hear about our industries or high buildings, but about the food for sale on the pushcarts where all can buy. They say, 'Can you really buy all the bread and butter you can eat? Can you really have fresh fruits and meats? And it is cheap?' It is very sad."

We cut back along 7th Street toward the part where the school children are beginning to gather for play. This street is not as crowded as 11th, 12th or 13th. Those are supposed to be rough streets. Seventh Street has synagogues and women sitting out in the sun with baby carriages. On one side there is a public school. Around the corner on the square is St. Bridget's Church, with a parochial school in back.

We were nearing the corner when we passed a wide passageway leading back to a long irregular-shaped yard where there are a half-dozen five-story bulidings. In front, facing the street, the houses are only three stories high.

The son of the Russian janitor, a clean, spectacled student, opens the door to one of the houses and shows us the apartments. There are three rooms, of fair size, all of them light and sunny on the top two floors. The living-room has a fire place and two many-paned windows facing south. The bedroom and kitchen face north and there is a window in each. There is a little toilet off the kitchen. Instead of a wash-tub, the boy says, the landlord will put in a bathtub. There is no heat, no hot water, no electricity, but the rent is only $10.00 a month.

The houses are sordid, grim, and look as though they belong in a Dickens novel. But Maria, who believes in scrubbing with strong yellow soap, is thinking of blue and white check curtains at the windows and her blue rag rugs on the floor.

"Blue, the psychologists say, is a happy color," she says cheerfully, not at all taken aback by the seven years' accumulation of dirt in the apartments, for it is long since they were occupied, the janitor's boy says.

"Blue is the color of the sky and the Blessed Virgin's robes."

"If we take the top floor, we can use the roof. There'll be plenty of blue then. Alan can build a fence to make it safe for the children."

Her mind is pretty well made up—Saint Joseph has helped us in our search, for really, the roms envisaged with fresh paint, curtains, scrubbed floors, rag rugs and children's toys, are not so bad. A clear eye and a courageous spirit has transformed them into a home.

But it is too fine a day not to continue our walk, so we venture further into the depths of the East Side, down to Stanton Street to visit the model tenements of the Lavanburg Foundation. There had been stories in the paper a few weeks ago of the celebration of the fifth year of these model homes, built by the philanthropy, or shall we say, the loving kindness of a Jew, with the coöperation of his Catholic partner, two of whose sons are still on the board of trustees. Here there are roof gardens and basement club rooms, a kindergarten, and community activities. But the rents are $30.00 for three rooms, $34.00 for four rooms, and $42.00 for five rooms, low rents it is true, but too much for working people these days, when fathers of families are working half or full time for $10.00 and $15.00 a week and glad even of that to hold body and soul together.

"What should be done," said Maria, "is this. Landlords with the coöperativeness or sense of duty or whatever you want to call it, of Mr. Lavanburg, should take their old houses where the poor are still forced to live because they can't pay more than $10.00, $15.00 or $18.00 a month, and utilize the basements and roofs. There could be mothers' and fathers' clubs, and children's play clubs to meet in basement rooms for their activities. Community spirit and coöperation would be fostered. And the roofs could be made into playgrounds where they could gather together in summer instead of on crowded front stoops and garbage-filled streets, where the children are in continual danger. It wouldn't take much to make these reforms: only a landlord who has a social conscience and a few tenants who would coöperate and get things started. You don't have to have a million to do it. You don't have to have steam-heat and hot water. The poor are used to hardship. Small beginnings," she ruminated, as we walked back through dusky lamp-lit streets, for it was now five o'clock and twilight was upon us. "The roof playground first. . . . We'll see what we can do. . . ."

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MISUSE OF PUBLIC AUTHORITY

By GEORGE STEPHEN ROCHE

A PARTICULARLY elusive source of aggrandizement of official authority is to be found in the practice the French have termed *détournement de pouvoir*—the use of authority to accomplish a purpose other than that for which it was granted. This practice is hard to discover without detailed investigation of the day-to-day practices of each officer, and we should be interested in it because of its prevalence in those services by which the state most closely encroaches upon the sphere of action reserved to the Church, in charitable work.

The nature of the act of *détournement* gives it a particular significance in this field, because the act may be one of the principal growing points of public authority. Everyone familiar with the administrative process is aware of the desires of earnest officials to do things they consider to be important to the welfare of the state but which are beyond their granted powers. They may seek to accomplish their desires by means of indirection and circumvention, misusing granted powers to force acquiescence to their extra-legal acts where otherwise would be opposition. Upon successfully using their newly acquired powers, they seek legal sanction for them; they seek to make de jure that which is already de facto. And so the powers of the state expand.

True enough, there has not yet been collected sufficient proof to maintain the generality of this process of the expansion of public power, but cases which have come to light indicate the need of careful investigation of all instances of possible misuses of power in the field of social work, and give an added significance to the problem raised by them. The opportunity for forcing complaisance to extra-legal action increases with the power of the officer to affect economic life at his discretion; and nowhere is this discretion so complete, or its effects so far reaching, as in social work.

An example will indicate the type of act under consideration. In California, certain persons are sterilized by law: persons condemned by due process to the operation, and persons offering themselves for it. A social worker decided that it would be to the benefit of the state if a certain recipient of public aid, a Catholic, were sterilized. Under the law she could not force such action directly. She could, however, and did, cut off the public aid, giving the woman the alternatives of offering herself "voluntarily" for sterilization or of starving. If asked to give the reason the aid was cut off, of course she could give a legitimate, though unreal, reason. No suit claiming *ultra vires* action would remedy the injury, since the act of stopping the aid was within the legal competency of the social worker, although the particular result of this action was not intended by those who framed the laws.

Acts such as this, being unforeseen and not desired by the legislator, have no justification and should be prevented in so far as is possible. This is not a simple matter, however. We cannot prohibit all *détournements de pouvoir,* since some have been given a definite place in our legal system that entitles them to be condoned, if not to be praised. Such is the enforcement of one legislative act by the use of pressure exerted under the authority of another. The efficacy of a considerable amount of our regulatory legislation in industry is dependent upon this kind of misuse of authority, and we must be careful that we do not cause our whole regulatory structure to come tumbling down as a result of hasty action to cure an evil in another, unrelated field.

The problem of devising adequate safeguards for the free exercise of religion, or of any private rights, for that matter, then, appears to be intricate and perhaps impossible of solution. One defense is already denied us. We cannot discount the sincerity of the social workers responsible for the problem. Whatever their blindness, they are nevertheless working in good faith for the benefit of society as it appears to them.

This sincerity on their part has another consequence. It means that all their acts will have a color of beneficence, and cannot be attacked as vicious in the eyes of all the world. Quite the contrary. The inroads of humanitarianism in the past few decades have given some of these practices considerable popular support; so that, far from attacking them as acts universally condemned, we are hard put in some cases to defend the Church against their legal recognition.

The first thing to do seems to be to inculcate in the mind of the layman, who has little access to the data of the problem, a deep-seated prejudice against such misuses of power. This should be coupled with a recognition of the fact that the issue can never be clear cut, nor readily apparent to all, but must be recognized by those in close contact with social work and defended by those who, trusting in the wisdom of their leaders, can vote, and speak, and mold opinion outside the Church. A large mass of responsive votes would be some defense against this misguided humanitarianism on its own ground. But it is hard to secure a united vote of the Catholics, and, if secured, it might turn out to be of no avail, since we are at best only a strong minority.

Turning to legal remedies, we find ourselves facing an even more perplexing problem. The courts, in reaction to the attitude of the public toward the judicial process, have developed a reluctance to interfere with humanitarian acts, lest they be attacked once more as being reactionary and despotic. Then, too, an adequate remedy for this evil may well result in the up-

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setting of our whole judicial system if it be unskilfully designed. Or, it may bind upon us a more aggravated form of the very evil we seek to eliminate.

Mention has been made of the French experience. In France, very efficient administrative courts have steered an irreproachable course amid conflicting opinions of the relations of Church and State, and have definitely protected the Church from encroachments by means of annulment of official acts for *détournement de pouvoir*. But to borrow this institution seems impossible. It would be a mistake to transplant an institution of one state to another with a very foreign atmosphere and expect the same results of it. In this country we have no tradition of highly respected administrative courts with a strong judicial spirit. In all our years we have had but one real administrative court—the Commerce Court of President Taft's administration. In the light of its unhappy fate, any future attempt to institute *de novo* a comparable court appears to be a hazardous undertaking indeed.

We might borrow only the remedy used by the French administrative courts, *détournement de pouvoir,* giving our ordinary courts a new jurisdiction. We might allow our superior courts, or maybe our federal district courts to review acts of the social agencies on the grounds of a misuse of authority. But if we should do this, we would have to bear in mind the fact that, since the regular courts are outside the administration, they are reluctant to interfere with administrative details. Then, too, no redress might be allowed if the courts were manned by ardent humanitarians who could see nothing inherently wrong in the actions in question.

A proper solution to the problem must be carefully considered. No single remedy will suffice. But discussion will clarify the problem for us, and, even if it does not immediately realize much that is tangible, by causing an awareness of the different aspects of the problem outside professional circles, it may be of value.

To the Soviet Rulers

You plan vast futures, worlds where man shall be
Always supreme, himself divinity.
But, high above your schemes of peace and war,
Above the selfish wound, the useless scar
There swings a Star.

Nor deeps nor heights your fact bound creed holds true
Whereunto Love may sink or rise with you.
Yet on His mighty errand, past your plan,
Making your hopeful years a moment's span,
There moves a Man.

You build a highway, promising to show
Your troubled people the true way to go.
But, blocking all your vaunted gain and loss,
And turning all your glittering dreams to dross,
There gleams a Cross.

KATHERINE BURTON.

APOLOGETICS IN ACTION

By FRANCIS AUGUSTINE WALSH

A HUNDRED years ago the Oxford movement gave an impulse to the examination of the Catholic claims of far-reaching import and still effective. Since that time, however, the field of religious discussion has shifted. Among those who cling to faith in Christianity outside the Catholic Church there is more and more effort to convince themselves that by the restitution of Catholic symbolism and the adoption of practices traditional in the Church, they can undo the "national apostasy" which was the theme of Keble. But a far greater number of human minds and souls find themselves completely outside this group. To them, the old controversies mean nothing; the semblance of a faith once treasured has in large measure perished. But it has left a void; there is no central focus of belief and no bed-rock foundation for the restraints demanded by civilized morality. Along with this have come new errors and new misunderstandings of the Catholic Church and of her true doctrine on vital questions. The issue comes down to the complete eradication of all religion or to the integral restitution of a supernatural, visible, organized Church, whose doors are open to men of every race under heaven. In other words, it is the God of Truth and Love against a finite or developing or pseudo-god, or no God.

There have been two assemblies of bishops, priests and laymen at the Catholic University to study and discuss this situation. The converging of ideas independently formed made it evident that certain issues are dominant and that here was a field for action. The question was raised: Will the University sponsor an Institute in which these existing problems may be examined from every angle? After mature consideration, and despite the financial difficulty, the work has been undertaken, and a beginning will be made this summer. For the sake of adjustment to students and investigators, a plan has been adopted which will be spread out over a six weeks' session of an Apologetic Institute, with an intensive period of three weeks, during which members of the hierarchy will conduct the courses.

We can gage the importance attached to this active movement by the fact that bishops are to participate in carrying on the regular work. Most Reverend John F. Noll, D.D., of Fort Wayne, for many years has been in the forefront of Catholic presentation and defense; Most Reverend Edwin V. O'Hara, D.D., of Great Falls, besides his contributions in the field of sociology and economics, has had wide experience in practical methods of apologetics and Catholic evidence. Most Reverend Richard O. Gerow, D.D., of Natchez, has had extensive experience in the South and knows the methods suited to the people of that region. Their Excellencies have considered it a work of zeal; their

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presence raises the work of the Institute above the merely academic and gives promise of fruitful achievement.

Courses will also be conducted by Reverend Gerald Shaughnessy, S.M., S.T.D., well known for his studies concerning the leakage from the Church and of moral issues; Very Reverend John B. Tennelly, S.S., D.D., who has added to his apologetic teaching a great amount of research into non-Catholic beliefs and opinions; Drs. Sheehy and Walsh of the staff of the Catholic University will direct the research in special phases of religious opinion and practical methods. A special preparatory correspondence course is under way for those who make prompt application. An effort has been made to organize the Institute in an effective way; the project is vast, but the beginnings have been laid on a solid basis. A museum of anti-Catholic periodicals, cartoons and the like will be open for research students; the present-day Catholic literature will be a subject of careful study.

The general purpose is not research and information only; it includes the training of workers who will devote themselves to this field. It is hoped to direct the practical task toward the formation of a body of men equipped not only with the required knowledge but also with valuable training in methods of exposition and appeal. The aim is to make the missionary efforts of the Church effectively adjusted to the religious mind as it exists outside her fold; the point of view is manifold and contemplates growth along many lines. It includes the scrutiny of the non-Catholic mind in both its Protestant and its anti-Catholic phases. An appealing exposition is needed more than refutation or defense. Serious men, interested in human welfare, are everywhere interested in the religious situation; if religion is to be saved, we have to bend our best efforts to the task.

Winter Watercourse

Through cloistered glen, sequestered glade,
The pathway of this rill is laid
Along a road that rains have made.

The fingers of the frost enforce
Restraint upon this watercourse,
Stemming the flow, stopping the source.

Now under crust of frozen snow,
All movement is suspended, no
Swift fluid of the earth does flow.

But spring reanimates this hill,
Restores wild waters to their will,
Returns quick music to this rill.

No ice endures, no frosts remain
When April comes to shout again:
"I give these woodlands to the rain!"

CARL JOHN BOSTELMANN.

A DISCIPLE OF THE CURÉ D'ARS

By EUPHEMIA VAN RENSSELAER WYATT

THE SUN had set and a pale winter moon lit rather casually the small station at which the very small train stopped with an impressive whistle. It was Ars. I hauled out my bags; the engine snorted; a few passengers hurried by and the train rattled on. I looked at my luggage wishing it all had four legs like Garçon, the French bull. Then the station master called out to me as he locked up, that the hotel was just next door. So it was—a square commercial structure whose one bare salon was overheated by an enormous stove while the glacial period reigned everywhere else. Garçon and I ordered dinner and then decided that the few peasants sipping cognac were preferable to the icy bedroom, so he toyed with my chop bone as I lingered over a second demi-tasse. There was only one other visible guest.

"She is the companion of *Mademoiselle!*" remarked the proprietress proudly in a sibilant whisper.

Mademoiselle, she further confided, was a very important person. At this point, the companion moved over to my table and took up the theme. She made a dramatic gesture of the medals—rows of medals—that might be worn by Mademoiselle. Mademoiselle was upstairs. She was an invalid but a heroine. She had lost her leg in the war. She was also very pious: that was why she was staying in this not very suitable hotel, as she wished to be near the shrine of the Curé d'Ars. Hope was held out to me that I might probably see Mademoiselle on the morrow as usually, no matter how bad her leg might be, she always went to Mass on Sunday. Her little carriage—half tricycle, half reclining chair—was waiting in the corner. When Garçon and I finally mustered courage to climb the arctic stairs, we knew that Mademoiselle was indeed a heroine to spend November in that hotel of Ars.

Next morning, as predicted, I met Mademoiselle on her way to Mass. A broad highway leads from the railway into the village. At the crossroads, a statue of Saint Philomena points out the way to the church. Saint Philomena is the little Roman martyr whose knight errant was the Curé d'Ars. As the nineteenth century opened, Saint Philomena's tomb was discovered in the catacombs. "Pax tecum Filomena." Those three scant words are all her written history but beside her body was the little broken vial that had contained her blood—the proof of martyrdom. The remains of Philomena were translated to Mugnano, near Naples, but the stories of the blessings she had brought to the town were spread through France when the Revolution drove the Friars from her shrine. A young seminarian at Lyons heard the tale of Philomena. The heroism of the child of fourteen, who had lain so many hundreds of years forgotten in the dark catacombs, fired the imagination and the chivalry of the boy. Perhaps he asked the little martyr to help him with the Latin that had been so simply spoken by her and was so difficult to him. At any rate one of the most joyous spiritual partnerships, a charming mystical romance sprang into being between the peasant priest and the patrician saint. Saint Philomena soothed his dreaming and brightened his vigils. It was to her intercession that the Curé always attributed any answer to his prayers. Therefore it is entirely fitting that Philomena should be there as hostess at Ars to greet the Curé's guests. So much Mademoiselle told me as I walked beside her to church.

The little church, which is a tribute to the Curé's good taste, is now merely the vestibule to the garish basilica erected in his honor. The four shops of Ars are opposite and most of

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the other houses behind. Ars, with its plastered farmsteads, nestles in the soft valley of Les Dombes, which stretches richly to the east of the Saone just north of Lyons. Bounding the horizon on every side are distant mountains. Curving to the west the Beaujolais and the Lyonnais meet the Cévennes, while eastward mingling mysteriously with the clouds are the Alps; Mont Blanc itself appearing in majestical silhouette in the clearness of winter skies. In summer, Les Dombes lies in mellow sunlight. There is little woodland, and only a few scattered trees break the rolling expanse of fields and pastures, where reedy ponds, the haunt of wild ducks, reflect the sunsets. There is nothing parvenu about Les Dombes. A Merovingian tower rises out of a back yard in one of the villages, and the crumbling old chateaux usually date back to the early centuries, with their owners still living in mediaeval security. But on the whole the peasants in Dombes seem more prosperous than the nobility.

Ars is not intended for tourists. The commune is a close corporation. Mademoiselle told me that she had just bought the only piece of property for sale in the village. It was a large white building near the station which had been built for a convent, but the Carmelites had discovered it was too public for their cloistered lives. Mademoiselle was installing electricity and intended to make it into a house of retreat. There was a charming view of the basilica and village against the mountains. The convent itself was divided up into a maze of intricate passageways and cubicles. However, by knocking down some partitions, Mademoiselle would be able to have a chapel, sacristy, dining room, sitting room, kitchen, dispensary and her own apartments all on one floor.

That afternoon, in her tricycle carriage, Mademoiselle showed me about Ars. She took me to the Curé's miniature rectory. She pointed out the trace of the fire that Satan himself is supposed to have ignited in the bedroom, but among all the scant possessions of the Curé's bare little home nothing seemed so infinitely touching as the worn old pair of shoes that had been with him on so many an errand of charity through dust and mud and snow. We crossed the river by the ancient stone bridge and walked down the lane along which the Curé had tramped when first he came to Ars, and we continued on to the chateau where the Des Garets had been such warm supporters of the inspired young priest. When we said good-by the next morning, Mademoiselle told me that there would always be a room ready for me in the Foyer St. Jean Marie Vianney. But as the swaying wagonette bore Garçon and me at a gallop to Villefranche for the Paris express, I little thought that I would be able so soon again to take her at her word. Ars is a long way from Paris and Paris farther from New York. It is true that I had known Mademoiselle for barely twenty-four hours, but the spark of friendship flames quickly and one has only to look at Mademoiselle to know one is in the presence of a great soul.

All this time I have neglected to say that Mademoiselle is Marguerite Marie Baduel d'Oustrac, Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, Directrice de Catechistes Volontaires de l'Aveyron et de l'Ain; whose decorations include the Croix de Guerre avec palme; two Médailles Coloniales; Médaille d'Argent d'Epidémies; and the Insigne Réformé.

M. M. Baduel d'Oustrac was born in the family chateau near Rodez in Aveyron across the hills and the river from Ars, down toward the Auvergne. Before she was sixteen she had begun to teach the village children their catechism and then began teaching girls from other villages to be teachers. When eighteen, she organized them into the Volunteer Catechists of the Department of Aveyron and in another two years she had over two thousand members. By this time she realized that the women of Aveyron needed practical as well as spiritual training and, after studying the system at work in Belgium, she inaugurated at Rodez an École Menagère Rurale, whose staff traveled through the department demonstrating hygiene and domestic science. It was the very first rural school of its kind in France. Her sister, by this time had married M. le Baron de ——, but Marguerite Marie declined to consider any proposals as she had determined to devote her life to single service. She entered the Red Cross Training School in the Square de Peupliers in Paris, and for the next seven years devoted herself to studying every branch of the service, concluding with two years of duty as head nurse in the Military Hospital at Oujida in Africa.

She had just returned to Rodez when the tocsin clanged in August, 1914. À Paris! Mlle. Baduel d'Oustrac was the only woman to step on board the train that night with the poilus when the men of Rodez answered the call. For the next two years she was at the front. At Abbeville, when the German advance threatend to overwhelm them, Mlle. Baduel d'Oustrac refused to leave her wounded. She called for volunteers to stay behind the retreat. Six nurses out of the thirty-six in her unit remained with the men who were too sick to move. But the French line held. Then she was sent as head nurse on the hospital ship, Charles Roux, to the Dardanelles. They were stationed off Salonika at the time of the Serbian retreat. The plague raged about them. That was when she gained her Médaille d'Epidémie. For two years she stayed on the Charles Roux without taking any shore leave. Her whole unit received the Fourragère. It was in the Vosges that she was wounded. She was cruelly needed and she wouldn't give in. For two months she ran her station with a crippled knee. She, who was so careful of others, was careless of herself. By the time she gave in to her suffering, the infection had reached the bone. The next six years she spent on her back strapped to a board. But even then she continued to edit the bulletin of the Catechists of Aveyron, and to direct their work. Finally the whole leg was amputated but in the amputation some nerve was injured. Spinal complications occurred. Marguerite Marie implored the Curé d'Ars to spare her active spirit a life of total inaction. In 1927 she was able to go on crutches to Ars to thank him and Saint Philomena. Then she decided to organize the catechists in Les Dombes. She bought for their biannual retreats the Carmel in Ars and she named it the Foyer St. Jean Marie Vianney. Before the war she had been able to assemble her catechists at Rodez as her guests. Now she provides them with rooms and beds but is forced to charge them a nominal sum for their meals. Their bedding they bring with them. But in every parish now in the Department of Ain (Les Dombes) there is a lay catechist, trained by Mademoiselle. She is at once their guide, their inspiration and their friend.

Close to Ars is a smaller village, Ste. Euphémie, where outside quite a grandiloquent stone church, the Greek virgin martyr stands guard with her lion. Once Ste. Euphémie had a convent and a parochial school. Now the nuns are dispersed, the convent is in ruins and the church is closed. Since the war there are many such parishes in France. It is the same condition that existed after the Revolution. When Saint Jean Marie Vianney was sent to Ars, his people had been without a pastor for twenty-five years. It took all the burning vitality of the saint to turn his people's steps again toward their church. The sober community of today then supported four taverns. The young priest learned for himself what it meant for two

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generations of children to have no instruction. He taught them himself every morning in summer at six o'clock before they went off with their flocks, with a prize for the most punctual. For the last twenty-eight years of his life at eleven every morning he gave a short talk on the catechism to the public. The Church of France has not forgotten his example and his warning. In Ste. Euphémie one of the Volunteer Catechists of Ain, trained by Mlle. Baduel d'Oustrac, has charge of the Sunday school and the children of the village. She also has the key of the church, where the people may at least gather to say their prayers, and she keeps it fresh with flowers. Just as the women of France once gathered the harvest and sowed the seeds while their men were at the front, so now they are helping with God's harvest until another generation can refill the ranks of the priestly dead. This chain of young girls in every village in so many departments in France, united in their work and their retreats and bound together in the National Confraternity of Volunteer Catechists with headquarters in Paris, has been for thirty-four years a spiritual armor of supernatural strength.

A small French village has its drawbacks for an extended stay. Cinemas and radios have no place in the peasant life. Carnegie libraries are unknown. Automobiles are as rare as a horse-drawn vehicle with us. The gentry are very poor and live far apart. Telephones do not exist. A winter in Ars means complete exile from the world. But Mr. Wickersham, who reminded us in his report that thousands of children in the United States never learn what the Ten Commandments mean, would understand why it is that Marguerite Marie Baduel d'Oustrac, Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur, is willing to donate her income, her physical sufferings and her loneliness to the Foyer St. Jean Marie Vianney. The sparks she lights among the farms in Les Dombes are her contribution to the torch of faith in France and in the world.

The Book of Snow

The new snow made the world so bright
My bedroom was unearthly white
And woke me up at half-past seven;
I dressed, and went out into heaven.

The upper edge of everything
Had turned into an angel's wing,
Feathers and flowers mixed together;
It was a starry kind of weather.

I had to keep my eyes half to,
But not so close but what I knew
All the early morning things
Done by my friends with paws and wings.

Twin fans told me clearly where
A crow had left the earth for air,
Around the spikes of splendid ice
Ran feather-stitching of the mice.

In below the hemlock tree
Was trefoil of the Trinity
Where a rabbit came to ponder
The meaning of my smoke out yonder.

A summer's day, for all its sun,
Never could open up to one
The book of earth like this to show
Such heavenly words upon the snow.

ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN.

COMMUNICATIONS

USURY

Norwalk, Conn.

TO the Editor: *"In primitive societies,"* suggests the late Mr. Webster, "the taking in return for a loan of money or goods of anything in excess of the loan appears always to have been a practice repugnant and in some cases unknown, due to the fact that in the early stages of civilization the thing loaned was not used as productive capital, but for consumption generally by persons in want. The exaction then of a return seemed a taking advantage of the life necessities of another. . . . With the growth of commerce and manufactures usury became a practice carried on by various devices in evasion of laws prohibiting it. *With the Reformation* legal sanction began to be given in European countries to the taking of interest up to a rate fixed by law. . . ." (Both italics mine.)

Here is an admirably succinct history of usury. "The Catholic Encyclopedia" goes more deeply into the question but arrives at much the same conclusions. The early Fathers followed the pagan ideology and held it "contrary to mercy and humanity to demand interest from a poor and needy man. . . . They protest against such transactions as, under the pretence of rendering service to the borrower, really threw him into great distress." We note that although Luther followed the early Fathers and Saint Thomas Aquinas in condemning lending for interest, Calvin permitted interest on money advanced to rich persons. Here, with Calvin, the midwife to Puritanism, and not with Luther, the peasant, we find the opening wedge of materialism.

To those Catholic writers, who persist in labeling everything they do not like, "pagan," I should like to point out that it is fairly well established today that the theory of interest received its greatest impetus from the Reformation and Calvin. Mr. Aldous Huxley holds that "Protestantism . . . has a great crime to answer for: it sanctified the business man. . . . Before the Reformation . . . these rich men were always regarded, by the official guardians of moral standards, as the devil's subjects. It remained for Protestantism to naturalize them as God's." Again Professor Shri Vishwanath Maharaj Keskar, a Brahmin, who visited America last summer said: "The Protestant Reformation made money and its possession respectable for the first time in Christian history, and American capitalism . . . has brought business men and money lenders (the modern bankers) from the fourth-rate social position which they occupied in the middle ages to the front rank which they now hold in the United States." Dr. Karl Adam in "The Spirit of Catholicism" remarks: "According to Max Weber and Tröltsch, the native soil of capitalism is Calvinism, and it was born in Puritan England and Scotland." Storm Jameson in "The Decline of Merry England" has written a fine book which bears out all of the quotations noted above.

Agnostic, Protestant, Brahmin, Anglican and Catholic all seem to agree that: (1) usury is not pagan but Puritan; (2) it is a by-product of the Reformation; and (3) it is respectable only where the ideology of the middle class is predominant.

It was with these conclusions in mind that, one day, I chanced upon two volumes issued by the Russell Sage Foundation: "Small Loan Legislation," by Gallert, Hilborn and May, and "Ten Thousand Small Loans," by Robinson and Stearn. Among the myriad shocks I received from a study of these volumes, the rudest and most disheartening was that society (you and I) has found it necessary to charge interest at the rate of 42 percent per year on small loans (politely called in the advertisements of

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small loan companies, "3½ percent interest monthly on unpaid balances"). Not only have you and I found this rate on interest necessary, but we have legalized it, so that, as the authors suggest, a respectable (sic) person may now invest his money in these loan agencies, with the assurance that he will not be jailed for taking advantage of and increasing human misery. The exploitation of the poor is, I gather, quite profitable. I am informed that one of the holding companies which operates these loan agencies paid, during the year of 1932, $17.00 per share on its preferred stock.

Where Catholic Action stands on the problem of small loans, I do not know; but it cannot, obviously, reconcile society's answer to the question with either pagan or Catholic ethics. The pagan realized the necessity of aiding a neighbor in want, and the Catholic must do so as a matter of charity.

Can Catholic Action say to Catholics who are in temporary want, but who do not desire charity, "Go to the usurers and pay your 42 percent annual interest"?

As early as 1896, the Hebew Free Loan Society was established in the city of New York. This organization is still making loans to persons of all creeds up to the amount of $500 without any interest or charge whatever.

I am indebted to Mr. Abraham Kotcher of the Society for a copy of its constitution and by-laws and for a copy of its last annual report. I should like to quote at length from these data, but I lack time and space.

Suffice it to say that Catholic Action should at least keep Catholics from burdening the already overburdened Hebrew Free Loan Society.

I think that there should be in each Catholic parish, or at least in each diocese, a fund for the making of small loans. A mere certification by the applicant's pastor, or his designee, that the applicant is a person of good moral character should be sufficient for the obtaining of a loan. The fund would not have to be large, because the Hebrew Free Loan Society has lent its total capital about two and one-half times within a year; and its greatest annual losses have been but one-fourth of 1 percent. When the initial capital is expanded, then the plan might be extended to non-Catholics. Plans for administration could, however, be settled by each parish or diocese.

Here is a plan which requires no legislative lobbying, which does not require the entrance of Catholic Action into society, but which simply suggests to society that Catholics are capable of taking care of their own. Hence it merits no attention whatever.

DONALD POWELL.

WORK FOR THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: Since the war and the years of reconstruction after the war, the Knights of Columbus have had little of great national work to do, and by this time, their armor must be getting rusty. About the only activities, at present, do not reach beyond individual parish limits. Yet I believe that there is at the head of this great Catholic organization, men as capable of great things as in 1917-1922. In the ranks there is just as much enthusiasm that is lying dormant because of the lack of some outstanding work of national importance. If such inaction continues, the order will die out, as has happened in the past ages to similar organizations which once flourished, or deteriorate into a mere insurance society.

Some new big enterprise is needed to arouse enthusiasm and foster zealous Catholic activity on the part of that great body of men. One such enterprise, it seems to the writer, might be worth serious consideration. It is, that the Knights of Columbus take a religious census of the United States as well as of Canada. They need not confine their inquiries to Catholics only, but find out the religious beliefs of all.

The various states and provinces could be divided into districts and sections, according to well-thought-out plans, and a house to house visit made by real knights to find out how their brethren fare in their spiritual and temporal lives.

Some years ago the writer was told in New York, that a few zealous Catholic social workers found in a few blocks sufficient work for half a dozen priests. Needless to say the discoveries made in a nation-wide census or canvas would bring to light a vast amount of information which would be to the great advantage of religion. Not only would we find out the number of Catholics in the United States and Canada but the extent of leakage and the causes of irreligion. By the personal contact of sincere Catholic men, fallen-away Catholics, both individuals and families, would be brought back to the fold, thousands of non-Catholics started on the road to the Faith, Catholic literature widely distributed, the Catholic school strengthened, religion in education vindicated, an effective spread of the Catholic social doctrine made. These are only a few of the Catholic activities which would go hand in hand with a great census. Others may suggest many more.

The writer feels confident that such a work aided by prayer, and coöperation of other Catholic bodies, would have a strong appeal to the Knights of the nations and give them a big labor of love, in the cause of Christ, for several years, and perhaps provide them new work of far-reaching consequences for a generation.

PAROCHUS.

THESES AND TEACHERS

Ivanhoe, Minn.

TO the Editor: After reading Father Francis P. Donnelly's "Theses and Teachers" in THE COMMONWEAL of February 1, I learned that he is also the author of a book on "Art Principles in Literature"; and that caused me to regret that he did not treat his problem even more from the viewpoint of art.

His plea for a more humanistic training for the graduate student is, of course, timely; but I should hardly wish to recall "the doctoral dissertation, which formerly was written in Latin"; nor should I be willing to admit that "the purpose of the dissertation or thesis . . . is . . . to guarantee to the world that they [the candidates] can teach and head a department." Quite as important a rôle probably is that of presenting—imparting—scientific information; for theses are read, and should be of help to others, particularly to other graduate students. In short, theses must combine judiciously science and art.

Attempts to present scientific information too often lack concreteness. In the mind of the trained scientists, it is true, an abstract generalization is the bright light of thought, receiving its radiance from vivid past experiences. But for even the graduate student—with a more or less humanistic training—these same experiences are lacking to vivify for him this same generalization.

In addition to the humanistic training, therefore, the writer of a dissertation should receive specific training in poetic (as distinguished simply from rhetoric). Hence I should welcome from Father Donnelly's pen another article, entitled, say, "Poetic and Thesis Writing."

ALFRED SPELTZ.

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THE CHURCH AND ECONOMICS

Milwaukee, Wis.

TO the Editor: Sincere congratulations on your splendid editorial, "The Church and Economics," in the February 15 issue of THE COMMONWEAL. The message is timely, sane and cogent.

May I venture a suggestion to the important practical question: "How may Catholics bring their Catholic principles to the attention, and the acceptance, of their non-Catholic citizens?" The divine command was and is: "Go, teach ye." Its execution lies with the bishops of Christ's Church. If every bishop in the United States commissioned one or more competent representatives to expound the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI in a series of popular lectures, preferably, in public halls; if every Catholic university and college offered free evening courses on these documents; if the National Catholic Welfare Conference supplied to all Catholic papers a brief and clear summary or study-outline of the same—not only would Catholics learn and be inspired to teach their non-Catholic associates, but the secular newspapers would carry the message to millions of their readers.

In order to correct the fundamental and false assumption of materialism that human beings are mere mechanisms, convincing proofs from reason alone ought to be given in the course of the lectures mentioned above. Believers would be immensely helped by having their faith thus confirmed. Non-believers, unless reason gives compelling arguments for the existence, spirituality, immortality and freedom of the soul, would question all subsequent statements. Clearly the proofs ought to be popularized in order to be effective with the general public. The economic distress throughout Christendom appeals to the divinely appointed teachers: "Clama ne cesses: quasi tuba exalta vocem tuam."

REV. W. A. PADBERG, S.J.

THE BABY RACKET

Pittsburgh, Pa.

TO the Editor: Mr. Alfred A. Conway's letter on "The Baby Racket" is very bitter. I am sorry he feels badly treated, but note with satisfaction there is no complaint of the quality of the medical care his family received, except as to the financial end: to our mind the least important detail, though that is what makes the wheels go around, literally, for the doctor.

On first thought I was for letting this go by with the "what's the use" attitude, but because of the prominence THE COMMONWEAL gives it, and as one of its founders in happier days, I feel, for the sake of the readers, a certain responsibility that it should be answered by somebody in my position.

I advise Mr. Conway to know well and confidentially some doctor he can admire as a sincere friend. He will then be properly advised. As a resident of a large city he should certainly know his way about, especially after six such familiar experiences as he records. He should seek competent care commensurate to his purse, otherwise he is taking accommodations and services beyond his means.

To obtain such medical care is entirely possible and is only common sense. Every community, and especially every large city, has very good services available for very little. Cardinal Mundelein's "anti birth-control" lying-in hospital gives all care, everything, for $50.00 or less (this was a year or more ago); and we have the same service in this city, though here the attending physician donates his services. In fact, the totally indigent, through the charity of the profession, receive the best of care: medical, surgical and nursing. Just why the medical profession should give three-fourths or more of its service gratis and be the "goat" of a pernicious social system is beyond me to explain, except that I have a suspicion that the members themselves are to blame, and it is something that some attempt is being made to straighten things out. Really what Mr. Conway is unconsciously complaining of is the unfairness, or rather the uneveness, of the distribution of the load.

I further advise absolute frankness, at all times, between patient and physician. Some responsible party, if not the physician himself, should explain all anticipated details, including costs. Any reticences are bound to eventuate in embarrassment, for someone, at sometime. Our chief complaint is the "four-flushing" private-room patient. Some people deliberately run into a huge outlay, either thinking it necessary, or for less valid reasons, with little thought of capacity to pay.

It is not necessary or fair to condemn doctors as a class, and the hospitals, and even the laws of a sovereign state which seek to protect the lives of loved ones.

Mr. Conway is advised that few doctors are even moderately wealthy; that many very busy ones die leaving their families destitute. By our own admission, one-fourth of the profession have an income of less than $1,000 a year. The New York *Times* recently published an exhaustive report on the cost of medical care. I recommend this for careful study and reflection.

HERBERT H. SULLIVAN, M.D.

Editors' Note: This controversy is now ended.

THE SEMINAR IN MEXICO

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: May we, through your columns, draw the attention of your readers to the Eighth Seminar in Mexico which meets July 8 to 28, 1933.

The Seminar is held under the auspices of the Committee on Cultural Relations with Latin America and provides opportunity for study of the life and culture of the Mexican people. The Seminar, with eight years' experience behind it, offers a three weeks' program of lectures, round tables and field trips, all planned to give a comprehensive and non-propagandist introduction to Mexico.

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The first ten days of the program is conducted in Cuernavaca, a unique background for unhurried and thoughtful discussion. The second ten days is spent in Mexico City. The Seminar is followed by three weeks of optional trips to the states of Michoacan and Oaxaca and to the village of Tasco.

Applications and requests for additional information should be addressed to

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THE PLAY

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

Alien Corn

SIDNEY HOWARD ranks easily among the three first playwrights of America. Eugene O'Neill probably comes first, although the perpetual conflict between his reason and his emotions often spoils the internal value of his work. He is far less profound than he is credited with being, and yet more authentic in his poetic instinct than his severest critics are apt to admit. Either Sidney Howard or Elmer Rice might easily pass O'Neill in the race, but neither has done so as yet. Howard, I think, has the greatest native dramatic ability of the trio and the greatest versatility, but suffers too frequently from acute self-consciousness. Rice is the least inhibited of the three in his actual work, but his spontaneity is partly offset by limited scope in themes and characterization. In watching the work of these three men from year to year, one is conscious of waiting with a certain quick anxiety for the final development of latent qualities and of being slightly disappointed when those qualities fail to mature.

"Alien Corn" is the latest Howard play. It has surprisingly little in common with his previous work. One could look in vain to find a trace in it of "They Knew What They Wanted," or of "Lucky Sam McCarver," or of "Ned McCobb's Daughter," or of "The Silver Cord." Nor does one catch the faintest strains of the Howard adaptation of "Michel Auclair," nor, for that matter, of his transposed and rewritten version from the French of "The Late Christopher Bean." The mere listing of these plays shows the scope of Sidney Howard's imagination. No two of them are alike either in theme or in character or in locale. Sidney Howard is essentially a poet who has disciplined himself too self-consciously into becoming a vigorous, hard-hitting theatrical writer. He has a great tenderness which he is afraid of showing, and a decent sentimentality which he is always trying to hide. His sense of comedy is unfailing, and is probably the only quality to be found in every one of his plays. "Alien Corn" is a play about homesick people who happen to be musicians. It is distinctly not, as many criticisms would lead you to believe, a play about musicians who happen to be homesick.

Ottokar Brandt, a concert violinist whose left side has been partly paralyzed from an accident, and his daughter, Elsa, a pianist, find themselves in a small town of the Mid-West which is the seat of an endowed college for women. Elsa teaches music at the college, and dreams with her father of a far different life in Vienna. The need of security and a salary bind her to the hateful routine of the small college, to the irritating petty politics of the campus, to the conflicting ambitions of professors and their wives. The son of the Conway who founded this Conway College falls in love with her and she with him, though they lack the least bond of common interest. Conway's wife discovers the state of affairs, but as the internal union of her own marriage had already broken on the rock of divided interests, her jealousy is merely that of envy and a deeply hurt pride. In the end, Elsa discovers that it is not Conway whom she has loved but the need of freedom from her own slavery to salary and security. She gives him up, gives up everything, in fact, to seek with her father the insecurity and the inner freedom of Vienna and her art.

It is easy enough to say that the play, well written as it is in many scenes, fails to carry conviction. But the reason for that failure is the important matter. Mr. Howard, too self-consciously, has written the play as if it were the story of artists among the Philistines—that old tale of the poet pitched against Main Street. Yet I am certain that, in its original conception, it was not the struggle of artist against dullard that counted, but the theme of eternal homesickness inspired by the struggle of dreams against reality. The splendor of the theme that only the adventurous can find themselves is lost in the confusions of the rather trite artist theme. Elsa Brandt might be wholly persuasive as a neurotic woman lacking, until the very end, the courage to venture forth. But she is not at all compelling as a thwarted artist, even with all the personal glamor of Katharine Cornell's acting of the part. Mr. Howard has tried too hard to make her appear as a potentially great artist, and, as a result, the essential tragedy of her homesickness and struggle to find herself has been blurred almost beyond recognition. This is an excellent example of what I mean by saying that Howard's self-consciousness often plays him a bad trick. He had a play here of universal quality. I am certain that he must have thought of it first as a very simple story of people who were homesick and miserable because they worshiped too long the false god of security, because, in short, they yearned for their own inner and forgotten strength. But in the writing, Mr. Howard began to seek theatrical glamor. He made the story of the artist overshadow the story of the human being, and so lost the soul of his own play. (At the Belasco Theatre.)

A Saturday Night

OWEN DAVIS has missed by a hairbreadth writing one of his very best plays. "A Saturday Night," in which the gracious Peggy Wood returns to the American stage, is an effort to write a decent play about decent people, about a mother who does not forsake her unsuccessful husband and troublesome children for a man who can offer her more material freedom. The characters are all thoroughly real and all are afflicted with human weaknesses. The husband proves he is no saint. The daughter is panting for the new freedom. The little son is a delightful boyish pest. The mother has her moment of wishing to give up the drab struggle. But underneath all the temptations and weaknesses, we find these people have the instinct for deeper values and for clinging to life's wise discipline. For all of this, we should be thankful to Owen Davis. Yet the play never comes startlingly to life. The fault, I think, is partly Mr. Davis's in not cutting the lines of struggle deeply enough, and partly Miss Wood's in acting the part of Marguerite Langdon, the wife, with too great a suavity and measured assurance.

Instinctively, and also by association, Katharine Cornell comes to mind as the person who should have played Marguerite. I say "by association" because both Miss Wood and Miss Cornell played in the Actors' Theatre revival of "Candida" some years ago, and the difference in the quality of their work in the Shaw play is just the difference needed to give "A Saturday Night" its proper sense of struggle and uncertainty. The whole point of the play rests on the temptation of the wife to break with all the harrassments of her married life. If that temptation is not too strong and real, the play has no suspense to carry it forward. Miss Wood never leaves you in doubt. Her final decision is always a foregone certainty. There is no quivering sense of even momentary rebellion. She reduces inner strength and decency to mere niceness, almost to sheer conventionality and lack of spirit. She may be the salt of the earth, but she is hardly its strong spice. No play that goes beyond light comedy can achieve strength without a sense of real struggle. Mr. Davis has not fully indicated the struggle, and Miss Wood obscures it still further. It is a pleasantly entertaining play, but not a fine play. (At the Playhouse.)

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BOOKS

Black Magic

Voodoos and Obeahs, by Joseph J. Williams, S.J. New York: The Dial Press. $3.00.

FOR venal purposes of sensationalism, there has been so much abuse of the subject of the weird and often horrible practices of Voodoo and other forms of Negro witchcraft that it is admirable to have a clear, scholarly and thorough study of the subject. Father Williams here gives us this, with satisfying objectiveness and without in any degree sacrificing "color." He applies himself to the aspects of Negro witchcraft in the West Indies, tracing its origins from African tribal practices, through its modifications due to the conditions of the black people in the new lands, to its status today among the freed Negroes. The Ophiolatry, the orgies induced by strong drink and the carrying to a psychopathic extreme of the Negro's genius for rhythm both in sound and in dancing, the rare rites of cannibalism, the common practices of putting curses on people causing them to swell up and burst or waste away to death, the Myalism by means of which allegedly these curses are removed, the skilful poisoning employed by the witches, and the adaption by the Negroes of Christian rites, especially Revivalism with its singing, swaying and frenzies, are explained by the writer, it might be said, for once and all.

To even the moderately informed and impartial person the book offers, besides its primary information, a fine case study of the vast difference between Christianity and what the superficial and romantic in regard to religion might describe as a native religion, and, therefore, the natives' own business and not to be disturbed. Competent students of comparative religion are familiar with the fact that primitive religions in our own times give ample evidence of being not original, or simple, or undeveloped native religions, but decadent religions. Compared to them the message and work of the Christian missionary appear in realistic perspective as tidings of great joy and a charity as fundamental as the medical aid that follows in the missionaries' footsteps, clearly Christian as that is, too. Our modern sceptics too frequently fail to realize that they are in spite of themselves heritors of Christian enlightenment and a Christian code of ethics. Lapped in their vestiges they can safely indulge in romantic notions of what savagery is, notions that are painfully remote from what those who know savagery at first hand are familiar with—above all the awful, awful vacuity of savagery, its sad and terror-burdened nihilism, at the very opposite pole from more and more abundant life, charity and understanding. In this book in naked truth appear the characteristics of savage superstitions which depend on deceitful mystification and fear. They are identified with witchcraft as distinguished from true religion by being mainly concerned with the practice of malevolent magic for intrinsically petty, immediate purposes, rather than the adjustment of man's relation to Divinity and to a code for daily conduct for the improvement of the individual and the benefit of society.

Although the present study is concerned with vile and degenerate forms of religion peculiar to a racial group, it should of course be clearly understood that it is not an indictment of the racial group. Too ardent rationalists of the Spencerian school are apt to make hasty, and totally unfounded, conclusions of this sort by generalizing from particulars. In other words the many thousands of law-abiding, humane and truly religious Negroes should not feel any more personal identification with the practices analyzed in this book, than a decent white person feels personally identified with "hex" practices of the present or the witch-baiting of innocent persons which was a common form of mass hysteria among whites not so very long ago and not very far from home. The frequent nonsense of overwritten, overexcited and unscholarly works such as Seabrook's "Magic Island" and some of Paul Morand's stories and observations of Voodooism have no doubt done serious injury to human souls by imputing typical Negro reactions to religion. It may safely be said, I believe, that there are no excesses committed by some Negroes which have not had their counterparts among some whites. Father Williams maintains a careful limitation of his observations and conclusions to the particular phenomena of his study.

FREDERIC THOMPSON.

The Martyred Queen

Marie Antoinette, by Katherine Anthony. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $3.00.

MARIE ANTOINETTE is commonly remembered as the queen who, on being told that the peasants demanded bread, asked: "Why don't they eat cake?" Miss Anthony proves this to be one of the many libels on her memory, in that it originated centuries before, and shows us a character that could not have been guilty of such callousness. She reveals Marie Antoinette as the most maligned woman of modern European history and champions her as one who has been misrepresented and misunderstood.

The book reads like fiction. In fine, the reader is all too aware of the touch of the novelist as well as the scholarship of the historian. But it is a brilliant biography. With clear and sympathetic comprehension, the author draws a tragic picture of the princess married when fourteen years old, by the machinations of her imperial-minded mother, Maria Theresa of Austria, into the most depraved court of Europe, and to the hypocritical, malicious, weak Louis XVI, "an exaggerated replica of his father" (Louis XV) and "as wholly incompetent."

Light is shed on other figures, too: on Louis XV and his mistress, the Du Barry; on the conniving Beaumarchais, who plotted so successfully to bring France into the war of the American Colonies against England; on Cardinal de Rohen; on the sinister figure of Cagliostro, the sorcerer; on Lafayette, the friend of Washington, portrayed as "a ninny, without talents, civil or military, narrow-minded and insincere," as Napoleon said of him. One sees vivid pictures of the household of Louis XV, where the child-wife fitted ill, of the fêtes at Versailles, of the flight to Varennes, of the capture, dethronement and brave death of Marie Antoinette, the first innocent victim of that triumph of violence called the French Revolution, when the rabble ran amuck through the streets of Paris.

One finds it difficult to follow the author's inferences of Marie Antoinette's friendship with the Swedish noble, Axel Fersen, because they are wholly unfounded, and one suspects that in trying to "humanize" her heroine, Miss Anthony needlessly reverts to her intuitions of a romance. Nor can one "fictionize" on the girl-queen's escapades from the stagnant community at the court of Versailles, which was a hot-bed of gossip, intrigue and scandal. We have the authentic testimony of her historian, M. de la Rochterie, that she was "an upright charming woman, a little frivolous, somewhat impulsive, but always pure; a thorough women in her winsome ways and tenderness of heart, until she became a martyr." Her life was in a sense a martyrdom, with her unhappy marriage and her bearing children doomed by birth because of a taint in their father's

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blood. Her fortitude was phenomenal. The German de Gould's testimony upholds M. de la Rochterie's; and it is curious that neither in the book nor in the bibliography attached is any reference made to either of these men or their testimonies.

Miss Anthony stresses the religious aspect of the Revolution as "an outbreak of submerged French Calvinism," when "Puritanism came into its own at least in France." The truth is that the Revolution was mainly a social uprising from two senses: a too centralized monarchy, isolated and apathetic; and a yearning for social equality. Of course, Robespierre brought in his religion of the *Être Supreme* and the Goddess of Reason; but it was easier to lop off heads than to change the religious consciousness of a people.

Marie Antoinette lives on in this book as the loneliest and most fascinating feminine figure of modern French history.

THOMAS F. HEALY.

Genius and Its Laws

Form in Modern Poetry, by Herbert Read. Essays in Order: No. 11. London: Sheed and Ward. $1.00.

IN CRITICISM it is less important to agree in judgments than to agree on terms. In this contribution to the "Essays in Order," Mr. Read is chiefly concerned with critical terminology. He reduces to compact definition (in several cases revised from previous formulations) the problems already discussed in his earlier books, "Reason and Romanticism" and "The Sense of Glory." Simply stated, those problems may be summarized under two headings: (1) In what essentials does the poetic character differ from the non-creative, and from the prosaic? (2) By what discipline or resolution does it realize its strength and appropriate form? The first of these problems is approached by means of the Freudian distinction between Id and Ego, which Mr. Read wisely employs less as a scientific than as a symbolic method of distinguishing between character (the impersonal "result of certain fixities or negations imposed on the flow of consciousness") and personality (that "coherent organization of mental processes" which accounts for the "element of self-determination in character"). This distinction then "corresponds precisely with the difference between rhetorical and lyrical literature, which is the difference often loosely implied in the terms 'classical' and 'romantic' literature."

Mr. Read argues these discriminations with his customary persuasion. They enable him to distinguish between the traditional classical category and that main stream of English literature "which begins with Chaucer and reaches its final culmination in Shakespeare, . . . is contradicted by most French poetry before Baudelaire, by the so-called classical phase in English poetry culminating in Pope and by the late Poet Laureate," ultimately to be "reëstablished in England by Wordsworth and Coleridge, developed in some degree by Browning and Hopkins, and in our day by poets like Wilfred Owen, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot." For Mr. Read the classical essence assumes the importance stressed by Coleridge in the nineteenth and by de Gourmont in the twentieth century: the impulse of genius to find its "appropriate form" through "the power of acting creatively under laws of its own origination." It is this form that Mr. Read makes the focus of his critical work. The present volume is a program rather than an enquiry. In three sections —on the long poem, Gerard Hopkins, and Keats—the program is applied with sufficient skill to make one regret both the lack of fuller documentation, and Mr. Read's failure to justify here a number of undeveloped hints and specific judgments. The final sections, proposing drastic revision of current critical

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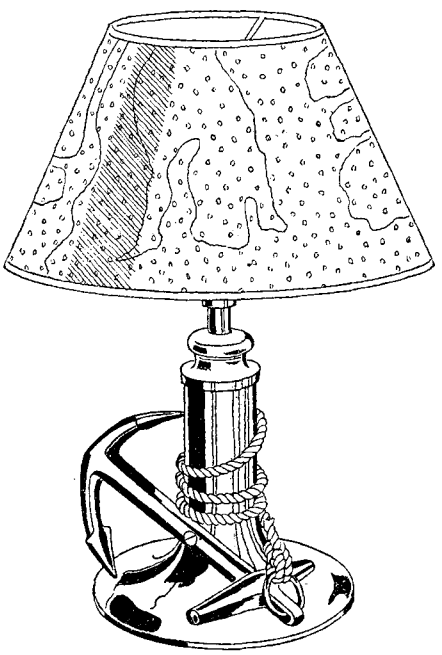

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NEXT WEEK

BABBITRY INTO VICKERY, by Michael Williams, explores the Utopia which has been gathered together rather loosely, in more than one sense, by Sinclair Lewis in his latest novel, "Ann Vickers." An extraordinary debauching of public taste is viewed, a complete anarchy of mind and morals. This seems to express its greatest triumph in its freedom to commit abortions, so that paradoxically, though it brags of living, it is really contra-life; it is not really for more and more abundant life, and a civil restraint of manners and graciousness in living, but for cowardice, ego-mania and dishonor. "By their fruits ye shall know them." In this Utopia are squalor and confusion. As the Editor of THE COMMONWEAL points out, it is a culminant barbarism afflicting in its way our troubled times—so bad that anything following it, must be an improvement; it is a final catharsis of the ignorant bosh it labors to exhaustion. . . . KANSAS VIEWS REPEAL, by Ernest A. Dewey, amusingly exposes that what has been publicized as representative of the Kansas intellect, quite neglects an unpublicized majority who are not leaping zealots of dryness. . . . . CATHOLIC MISSIONS IN CHINA, by George E. Sokolsky, tells how the Catholic Church in China is becoming Chinese, as distinguished from being a "foreign" religion. . . . BOYS ON THE LOOSE, by Joseph F. Healy, describes the increasing problem of the vagrant boy, and of what is being done for him as well as for the boy who stays home and assumes his responsibilities instead of roaming.

methods, are notably fragmentary. But however fragmentary in its findings, this short study provides both the repudiation of conventional formulae and the discriminations which should spur such revision. The serious reader will not mistake the sobriety of Read's discussion for the sort of doctrinaire mandate which has plentifully confused critical effort in recent years. With five or six contemporaries, he is reclaiming criticism from its confusions. In its present setting, the "Essays in Order," his enquiry into poetic form should promote appreciation of an essential and intelligent kind.

MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL.

A Mid-Victorian Family

The Fortress, by Hugh Walpole. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

Judith Paris, by Hugh Walpole. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

WITH the publication of "The Fortress," Mr. Walpole brings his chronicle of the Herries family, begun in "Rogue Herries," up to the mid-Victorian era and simultaneously promises "Vanessa" to complete his tetralogy. From sheer length, his presentation is impressive and many other sounder factors win admiration. For in portraying the prolific branches of a family tree spread over two centuries, he has created characters intensely real and individual. The Herries are sharply divided into two camps: those who are extremely practical and materialistic on the one hand and on the other those who are dreamers and seekers after an indeterminate spiritual freedom. Thus the novels offer a constant recurrence of pattern in which essentially similar characters move against an ever-changing England. National history, as a rule, plays an unobtrusive part, although Mr. Walpole sometimes yields with gusto to historical narrative which, however picturesque, only clogs his action. But above all he insists that the Herries are the essence of England. Through the delusion of pride the family itself has the belief that its greatness is coeval with the greatness of the empire. One suspects that Mr. Walpole himself laughs at the Herries. Certainly he invests them with fertility, longevity, accumulated wealth and a scattering of titles, but these are faint excuses for deserved prominence or righteous pride.

In Judith Paris, daughter of Rogue's old age, the author finds a character so fascinatingly dominant that even he succumbs. "The Fortress" is also Judith's book, and the curtain is dropped on the jubilant celebration of her hundredth birthday. So great is Mr. Walpole's love for her that doubtless she will continue for many chapters in "Vanessa" to defy him and death. There is the novelist's art here. For the reader, too, is loath to lose Judith, the woman in whose soul the two Herries strains merged into a conflict which precipitated most of the dramatic crises of her life and vastly affected regiments of her relatives. These crowd the canvas to such an extent that a genealogical chart is necessary but, with few strokes to spare for many, Mr. Walpole does manage to make them live. In this regard his task was easy, for despite certain variations the greater majority can be grouped into omnibus categories. Again motives sometime suffer from forced scantiness of development. The feud between the brothers, Francis and William, which runs through both novels was realistic in its inception from a triviality, but the reason for its continuance by William's son and grandson through the generations demands more elaboration. However, with an author who has provided such an abundance of absorbing fiction, one should not be greedy.

JOHN GILLAND BRUNINI.

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The Realist

Zola, by Henri Barbusse. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $3.00.

THIS is a Communist biography of a famous novelist who, were he living today, would undoubtedly pay obeisance to the creed of Moscow. Why Zola was not a Communist in his day, why he lingered first in the ivory tower of purely literary activity, then in the half-way house of Socialism, how much he was attainted by noxious "bourgeois" ideas—these are the matters which preoccupy the most eminent Communist writer of France of today. One would be tempted to dismiss this book as simply Marxian exegetics, if it did not provide such a vivid picture of the French writers of the latter part of the nineteenth century: the satanic Baudelaire, "that old tarnished paladin, Barbey d'Aurevilly," and lastly many pages of description of the unforgettable Huysmans.

Catholics will be interested to find that, unlike most writers on Zola and his group, Barbusse accords much more importance to the great convert Huysmans than to the spectacular and unrepentant Maupassant. The curious evolution of Huysmans from the drab naturalism of "Les Soeurs Vatard" to the beautiful Catholicism of "En Route" quite evidently impresses the biographer as one of the principal literary events of that time. Characteristically, he tries to explain it, first by the clumsy Marxian formula of economic motives; then, as if dissatisfied with this undignified approach, he shifts his emphasis to Huysmans's diabolism—"he was tormented by the fixed idea of the Evil One." This latter is the more plausible, although only a partial, explanation. Like most materialist writers, Barbusse ignores the Christian martyrdom of Huysmans's death.

M. Barbusse has evidently had access to the Huysmans letters, so jealously protected from publication by the terms of the author's will, and he offers some interesting evidence drawn from this source that "Against the Grain" was an "immense mystification." But how much weight can be put on this contradictory correspondence? Huysmans's letters were like his talk, curious, volatile and temperamental. Was he not wise, therefore, in forbidding their publication? The integrity of his conversion stands unimpaired after years of controversy; and his work is the best, the most reliable, text from which to study it. To that work Barbusse is constrained to pay tribute: "Huysmans refurbished so curiously the old arsenal of literary imagery with his meticulous and terrible pharmaceutical formulae and his sadism of the picturesque. . . . He entered Catholicism through the doorway of hell. He offered humbly and not unbeautifully his artist's paraphernalia and weapons, and his precious literary witchcraft, like the Juggler of Notre Dame."

FRANK C. HANIGHEN.

A Grandee

Pedro de Alvarado, Conquistador, by John Eoghan Kelly. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press. $3.50.

MR. KELLY has entered the field when "the imagination of mankind awoke from the long sleep of the middle ages and men of all races rushed to explore and seize the treasures revealed by the voyages of Columbus and Vasco de Gama." Obviously, he knows the story of the Spanish conquest with the thoroughness of a historian; and, better still, he can tell the story of that marvelous Spanish advance with the literary skill of an artist. The tone is fair, yet critical, to conquistadors, to churchmen and to the Indians, though the glamor of Spanish arms deadens the reader's sympathy for slaughtered and enslaved natives. It was the searching for gold, the desire for

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power, and uncontrolled ambition, that enabled the conquerors to win the most extensive empire yet conquered by a people. No odds or dangers held back the fearless captains whose Spaniards on horse and on foot attacked native forces a thousand times their number.

Pedro de Alvarado (1485-1541), like Cortes and Pizarro, was of Estremadura in Spain, where he and his four brothers grew tired of an impoverished, gentle existence. In 1510 the Alvarados came to Santo Domingo, where they took part in lesser exploits and then sailed with Grijalva to Yucatan (1518). A year later, he was chief lieutenant with Cortes during his conquest of Mexico, and according to Mr. Kelly he was the chief factor in quelling the religious war of liberation inspired by Montezuma when left with a garrison of forty Spaniards to hold Mexico City. Incidentally, there is no better survey of Cortes in Mexico nor a more graphic picture of the difficulties of the conquerors: lack of effective Spanish support, cheating explorers of their promised awards, rivalries among leaders, treachery for gold and fame.

As captain general in his own right, Alvarado conquered and pacified Guatemala (1521-1530), facing the same difficulties that Pizarro knew in Peru or Cortes experienced in Mexico, and evidencing the same unbelievable courage and miraculous exploits with companies of Spanish swordsmen fortified by Indian allies against multitudes of natives not badly armed and skilfully led. Electrified by the wealth of Peru, Alvarado led an unauthorized and ill-fated expedition against Quito or Ecuador (1532-1534), which weakened his prestige and confined his future to the rule of Guatemala.

RICHARD J. PURCELL.

Promise

Down East, by Wilbert Snow. New York: Gotham House. $2.00.

MR. SNOW'S is chiefly "folk" poetry, and definitely of one of the four or five regional classifications it is possible to make in what is regarded as distinctly American poetry. It is partially, if not wholly, submerged in the atmosphere and the tradition of the New England coast. Its background is more the sea than the land, which distinguishes it from the poetry of New England deriving from the source of Robert Frost's. Its stem would seem to be Masefield rather than a more native one. It is minor poetry, possessing excellences and weaknesses in an almost equal proportion: it is derivative, and yet manages to appear more than superficially original, since its motive is sincerity. If it is not conspicuous in the midst of contemporary poetry, neither is it so insignificant that it easily could be lost: it has its lights. At its best, it is to be placed with the work of certain contemporary poets who, at their best, possess a talent given too little attention, or none at all, in surveys of American poetry which attempt, but fail lamentably to achieve, inclusiveness: Harold Vinal, chiefly; David Morton.

Whether or no the technique of their fashioning often seem uncertain and regrettably far from dexterous, in certain shorter pieces (notably "Workers in Stone"), there is something of grandeur, imperfectly realized, one suspects, due to the exegencies of the chosen form. Other short pieces, such as "At Mont Saint Michel," ambitious of less eloquence and profundity, show Mr. Snow's talent in what are perhaps its best lights: clarity, sincerity and depth.

One regrets what may seem condescension, but it is true praise to say that Mr. Snow's third book still shows promise.

RAYMOND LARSSON.

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East and West

Nationalism and Education in China, by Cyrus H. Peake. New York: Columbia University Press. $3.00.

THIS volume is the product of a traveling fellowship during the year 1928-1929. Within five chapters, two appendices and a series of notes and references, the writer has packed much fascinating comment and reliable information. He contrasts education between 1860-1895 with that observable between 1895-1911; then studies nationalism as a force in modern China, and the propaganda of nationalism as disclosed within the Chinese text-books, drawing attention to the work of Kang-Yu-Wei and Liang-Chi-Chao in the development of modern nationalism (see page 122) as well as to the steady inculcation of the ideas of the late Dr. Sun Wen. Throughout this presentation of the case for the better education of all classes of Chinese, the argument carries the hall-mark of sincerity and knowledge of the Chinese people and their language.

The author seems to grasp that an outstanding danger in the field of education lies in a possible too slavish adherence to Western systems. To stress particular types of foreign culture is harmful, as it is useless, because such culture has sprung from political, social and economic conditions peculiar to its country of origin, and consequently is not adaptable to entirely different conditions prevailing in China. When the gigantic task of reforming the language of China, so that its many citizens may more fully read and write, is complete, there may be witnessed in the philosophical, historical and poetical literature of modern China a resurgence of the Chinese national spirit which will tend to use only those elements of Western civilization which can be made to conform to Chinese needs and mentality. Such a process is of vital necessity to the Chinese.

The author in directing attention to the fact that modern China must mobilize its own forces, and must draw faith and strength from its own literature, its own art, its own history, has performed a wise and deeply needed service.

BOYD-CARPENTER.

Emotions

The Art of Feeling: A Psychology of Our Human Adventure, by Horace G. Wyatt. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.50.

"THE ART OF FEELING" is an excursion into the psychology of emotion.

Mr. Wyatt's writing is lucid and sprightly. His purpose is practical—to help people to live comfortably with themselves and with the rest of the world—and his sense of humor is refreshing. He is acquainted with current works on the psychology of the emotions but he does not obtrude his technique. Three score pages of notes and comments relegated to the back of the volume reassure the reader that the book has been written in conscious contact with the technical literature of the subject. But withal it is a "best-seller" type of book with an appeal, as the preface puts it, "to the immediate experience of Mr. Everyman."

Professor Terman of Leland Stanford University says that this book compares very favorably with the Abbé Dimnet's "Art of Thinking." Well, it is that kind of a book. But, as one caustic critic said of Dimnet's book, it reminded him of the people who write on how to get rich quick; if they knew how to do it they would not be writing about it. Still, it is not the same with feeling. A strong emotion might impel a man to write such a psychology of our human adventure.

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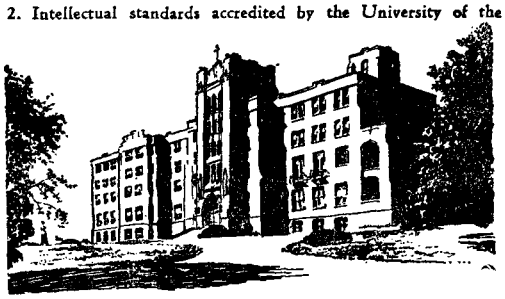

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Briefer Mention

Modern German Literature, by Arthur Eloesser; translated by Catherine Alison Phillips. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $3.50.

MR. LUDWIG LEWISOHN writes an interesting introduction to this summary of recent German literature and says that the manifest break-up of social and cultural forms existing since the Renaissance has helped to create wide interest in German authors, who have rarely been inwardly bound by those forms. At any rate there is no doubting either the interest nor the absence of "form" in the strict sense. Dr. Eloesser, one of the best known among Berlin critics, outlines the development of German imaginative literature since 1870. His book is distinguished for breadth of vision, knowledge of detail and penetrating analysis of books he considers important. The best chapters are those which deal with the novel. By comparison his treatment of poetry is rather weak, and his discussion of thought suffers by too much concentration on single volumes. In addition, some parts of the treatise (for instance the section on Leopold Ziegler) are already out of date, since they fail to take notice of recent and significant developments. But on the whole, despite a marked coolness toward Catholic writers, the book is fair and instructive. The present reviewer professes to like Dr. Hans Naumann's treatment of the same subject-matter a little more.

Der Junge Goethe; edited by O. S. Fleissner and E. Mentz-Fleissner. New York: F. S. Crofts and Company. $1.50.

ALTHOUGH intended for use in college courses and outfitted with addenda to serve an educator's purpose, the present book deserves commendation also from the general reader. By piecing together excerpts from the writings or letters of Goethe and others, and by then setting this mosaic against a background of fluent prose, the editors provide a consecutive and very interesting story of the great poet's youth which is at the same time a source-book. This work is in keeping with the best principles of modern teaching and merits sincere esteem. The illustrative material is good.

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